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ABSTRACT

Written to help couples prepare for parenthood and to improve the effectiveness of parents, this book provides extensive guidelines and background information for accomplishing the basic tasks of parenting. Chapter One depicts parenting as a process, delineates parents' tasks and describes how parents learn to be parents. Based on Erikson's theory of development, Chapter Two discusses parenting in relationship to the human life cycle. Chapters Three and Four examine the basic assumptions and techniques of five strategies of parenting that focus either on feelings or on changing behavior. Human development from birth through adolescence is discussed in Chapters Five through Ten. Chapter Eleven describes women's reasons for entering the work force and possible effects of mother's employment on children. Focused on single parenting, Chapter Twelve examines the experiences many parents go through as they cope with disruption of the family unit, come to terms with that loss, and establish new life patterns. Guidelines for stepparenting are provided in Chapter Thirteen. The concluding Chapter briefly indicates the resources (both inner and outer) parents can draw on when their children face severe problems. (Author/RH)

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THE PROCESS OF PARENTING

JANE B. BROOKS

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THE PROCESS OF PARENTING

JANE B. BROOKS

MAYFIELD PUBLISHING COMPANY

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To my grandparents and parents,
my children and their children

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Preface

Parenting means loving and caring for children, helping them to grow. As parents, we want to get our children off to a good start in life but are often uncertain about what to do. This book is written to help parents translate their love into effective parenting skills. To be effective, parents must understand how children think and feel and see the world. This book presents information on physical, intellectual, social, and emotional growth from birth to adolescence. Because parents are often most concerned about the problems that arise in childrearing, a major portion of each chapter is devoted to ways of handling difficulties. Parents must go beyond problems and be concerned with ways of promoting healthy growth. And so, this book describes the kinds of experiences children need to fully develop their capacities.

Each child is a unique individual with special likes, dislikes, skills, and problems. Parents need a variety of techniques for handling situations, depending on the specific characteristics of the child and the problem. To provide a range of techniques, the book describes five strategies of parenting and shows how they are applied to particular problems. Three strategies—those of Haim Ginott, Thomas Gordon, and Dorothy Briggs—emphasize communicating feelings and establishing relationships with children. Two strategies—those of Rudolf Dreikurs and of the behaviorists—emphasize ways of changing behavior. Parents can find solutions in these different approaches if they adopt a problem-solving method that consists of defining the problem, thinking about alternative actions, taking action, evaluating the results and, in many instances, starting over again.

Parenting is an intense, exciting experience that exercises adults in all areas of functioning. Parents develop physical stamina as they care for the newborn, who allows them little sleep. Their physical agility and speed increase as they chase toddlers. Their athletic abilities grow as they roller skate, ride a toboggan, and play baseball. Their minds are stretched in many directions. They master science and math to answer questions about where the stars go in the daytime, what makes rain, why people grow old. And then the questions only a child can ask—after all, why can't a girl grow up and marry a dog she loves? Where are children before they are born? Emotional expressiveness gets a real workout. The range of emotions is extended—there are fine gradations of joy and frustration never known before. Depth of feeling is intensified, and parents achieve incredible speed in emotional reactions. They can go from joy to tears, rage to delight, happiness to despair in just a few moments.

In the process of parenting, adults grow and change. We look at these changes and suggest ways parents can promote their own development as well as that of their children. Adaptations of parenting techniques for working parents, single parents, and stepparents are also described.

In helping a new life grow, we gain for ourselves an inner vitality and a richness in all our relationships. Parenting is indeed the best all-round exercise for being human. I hope this book contributes to your enjoyment and skill as you rear the next generation.

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Co-workers at Kaiser-Permanente Medical Group at Hayward also were supportive at every step of the way. Alice Pipes, the medical librarian, obtained articles and books. Dr. Norman Weinstein, the chief of psychiatry, and other staff showed interest and enthusiasm for the book.

My parents and sisters also made helpful comments, and I appreciate their thoughtfulness. Most particularly, I appreciate my children's understanding during the long evenings I spent writing and when I was irritable when the writing did not go well. They, too, were encouraging, commenting that I would soon work everything out.

I am hopeful that as readers find material useful or unhelpful, they, too, will make comments so I can continue to improve this book.

1

Parenting is a process

You have taken time out of a busy schedule to read a book about parenting. Perhaps you are considering parenthood, or are expecting a baby, and want to know more about a process you have not yet experienced. Perhaps you already have children and are having problems that have motivated you to increase your knowledge and develop your skills as parents.

This book is designed to help couples prepare for parenthood and to help parents enhance their effectiveness. And so it contains information about the many facets of parenting and of childhood, and about how children and parents change and enrich each other. You will be reading chapters about growth and development from infancy through adolescence, to help you understand what your children are experiencing at different ages and in different living situations and how you, as parents, contribute to their development. You will find descriptions and practical applications of various strategies and approaches to problems at each age. And you will find discussions of ways of interacting with children to promote effective functioning and to stimulate optimal growth.

DEFINITION OF PARENTING

A parent participates in the creation of a new individual. Usually the parent plays a role in physical creation. But most important and always true, the parent fosters all facets of the child's growth. Nourishing, protecting, guiding new life through the course of development—these are the tasks of a parent. The word *process* is used in 1 this book to emphasize that parenting is a continuing series of interactions between parent and child—a process that changes both.

The words "protecting" and "guiding" are vague. What do they mean in day-to-day life interactions? Saul Brown[1] presents four main tasks of a family: (1) establishing basic commitments to family members, (2) providing warmth and nurturance for all members, (3) providing opportunities and encouraging the development of individuality, and (4) facilitating ego mastery and competence. When these four tasks are related to the process of rearing children, we can describe the parents' main tasks as establishing warm, nurturant emotional relationships with children, and providing opportunities for the development of competence and individuality. Several studies have found that a child's effectiveness is related to a strong emotional tie with a caretaker who stimulates a positive approach to other people and the world, and to a consistent set of reasonable limits within which the child is free to explore and to develop skills. The challenge of parenting, then, is to relate to children in ways that stimulate their potentialities for growth and provide appropriate opportunities for experiences that develop these potentialities.

In this book you will find guidelines for meeting the basic tasks of parenting. The strategies of Haim Ginott, Thomas Gordon, Dorothy Briggs, Rudolf Dreikurs, and the behaviorists are discussed. Each presents particular methods for handling a variety of situations. Ginott, Gordon, and Briggs focus on communication of feelings, which they assert fosters strong emotional relationships. They focus less attention on limit-setting, although all three recognize its importance and provide helpful techniques. Dreikurs and the behaviorists, on the other hand, focus on establishing structure and limits and on teaching children how to behave. They believe that feelings are very important and discuss them, but their emphasis is on shaping children's behaviors. The five strategies presented include a wide variety of techniques for establishing relationship and setting limits.

THE PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH

Many authors have recommended problem-solving strategies using varying numbers of steps. The approach recommended here is an amalgamation of some of these. This book recommends a problem-solving approach that includes five steps: (1) identifying the problem, (2) developing a plan of action, (3) taking action, (4) evaluating that action and its effects, and (5) starting again, if necessary. This process takes time and requires careful observation, thought, and a lot of patience.

How do you identify a problem? Often the underlying cause is actually in another area of a parent's life—perhaps at work, or in the relationship between the two parents—and not in the child's behavior. But if you are convinced that this is not true, that the problem really is with the child's behavior, then you can think about the disturbing behavior and about what may be causing it.

Once a problem is defined, alternative actions can be considered and one chosen. If you are dealing with a recurring problem—for example, thumb sucking—and can calmly consider the causes and solutions and then act just as calmly, it may be easy to take the action chosen. If you are dealing with behavior that is

more disruptive—for example, a child who has begun to throw objects at people—and find yourself acting in response to that behavior, your own emotions may interfere with your ability to respond as planned. Or your assessment of the problem may have been inaccurate. In either situation the parent's response to the problem behavior may fail, and evaluation may reveal that a different approach is needed. Then you start the process over again, reexamining the disturbing behavior and your reaction to it and seeking a different and more effective way of handling it.

Ginott[2] gives a mother's description of how she had to practice to change her parenting behavior. The mother defined the problem as her tendency to insult her children when she was angry with them. Her first step was to become aware of what she was doing, even though the words slipped out before she could stop them. Gradually, she became able to stop herself just as she was about to say something sarcastic, but she had no substitute response so she mumbled a few words. This mother reviewed the situation several times and decided what she could say. The next time a similar situation occurred, she was able to express her anger in a calm tone. Once in a while she slipped and insulted one of her children, but she continued to try to control her behavior, and in doing so improved her communication and relationship with each of the children.

Parents often wish that there could be a single, simple solution to each kind of problem situation—one way to handle temper tantrums, one way to deal with refusals to eat, one way to deal with teenagers' rebelliousness. There is no formula that all parents can use to raise all children. Each child is a unique individual.

Differences are present at birth, as we shall see in Chapter Six and continue to develop throughout life. Some babies are soothed by being held and cuddled. Others dislike close contact but like being rocked in a carriage or cradle. When older, some children are sensitive and withdraw easily, others are outgoing and responsive. Some children become preoccupied with each activity they are involved in, others are flighty and have difficulty concentrating.

A behavior problem can originate in several ways, and the source of the problem will influence the solution. For example, a four-year-old boy may suddenly refuse to go to bed. Exploration with the child may reveal he is fearful, and reassurance about the absence of monsters may enable him to resume his regular bedtime. Another child may have the same problem, but it may stem from her need for extra attention after the arrival of a new baby brother. Her parents may decide to spend more time with her in the evening after the new baby has gone to bed for the night. Perhaps delaying the older child's bedtime for another fifteen minutes spent in play may be all that is required.

A child's age is an important factor when you are determining the best approach to a particular problem. The same problem will require different approaches at different ages as well as with different children. During the first year, parents may use strategies that focus on establishing relationships. During the toddler and preschool years, strategies that involve teaching skills and setting limits may prove more helpful. As children become teenagers and can consider many alternatives, techniques emphasizing communication skills are often the most effective.

Each parent is also a unique individual. One parent may find unacceptable the strategy that another parent finds effective. Some parents are not comfortable with as much confusion, noise, and disorganization as others. They may insist on very clear-cut limits, regularly enforced, while other parents will prefer greater flexibility. Each parent needs to be aware of his or her own reactions to techniques and to decide which are most useful in achieving the desired family atmosphere.

The complexity of using childrearing strategies increases when we realize that children may not be learning by the strategy parents are using. Loevinger,[3] in a perceptive and humorous article, illustrates this problem with the example of a five-year-old who hits his younger brother. The parent who punishes the older child with a spanking may actually be teaching that child that it is permissible to use physical aggression to obtain one's ends. The parent who uses reason and logic in dealing with the older boy may find that the child, seeing that no punishment follows hitting, is likely to do it again.

Research has shown that each of the different strategies can be effective in reducing problems. But no studies have been done that compare the effectiveness of the various approaches, and so it is hard to say that one method is better than another. Again, remember that each situation—with its unique combination of a child of a particular age and a parent with a particular personality and philosophy—needs to be examined carefully.

How, then, does a parent select a strategy? Why use a strategy—why not just do whatever comes to mind at the time? Because, says Loevinger, those children who have the most difficulties growing up and functioning are raised by parents who are impulsive, self-centered, and unable to follow a set of guidelines. "The chief value of a parental theory," writes Loevinger, "may well be in providing a model for the child of curbing one's own impulses out of regard for the future welfare of another."[4]

HOW WE LEARN

Parenting is a skill that is learned. One hundred years ago, when extended families lived in the same area and each family had many children, people learned to be parents by caring for younger brothers and sisters or for nieces and nephews. Many relatives were available for advice and example. The process of parenting was simpler to learn. Each family had an agreed upon set of values and a clear view of what the future held for their children, and so parents did not have many of the doubts parents experience today. A parents' word was law, and the wider society reinforced family values.

Today it is more difficult to learn about parenting. Parents have had almost no practical experience. For many years we have been a society of small nuclear families, and many of today's parents grew up without aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, or many siblings in the home. Some may, as adolescents, have babysat with neighborhood children, but even that experience provides only limited information. Even parents who have taken the time to read about child development may bring an infant home from the hospital without any notion of how to burp, bathe, or dress their new baby.

Today parenting experts are trying to provide the advice and support that used to come from grandparents and other relatives. But experts often disagree with each other, and they do not provide parents with feedback on how well or wisely they are dealing with problems. Thus, this kind of teaching and learning, while helpful, does not always tell parents what to do and rarely helps parents evaluate their effectiveness. Many parents do not really know, until their children are adults, whether their parenting has been successful.

EXPECTATIONS

We all approach a new experience with expectations of what it will be like. Expectations are built from what authorities have told us, what we have observed other people experience in similar situations, and what we have experienced in similar situations. If expectations are realistic, they can help us prepare for the event, function at our best, and elicit the most positive results for all who are involved.

Unrealistic expectations create problems, however. First, we find when we act on them, our behavior is often inappropriate, and we do not understand why. If some parents expect, for example, that they can toilet-train a nine-month-old child, they are doomed to disappointment. Worse yet, they will create a strong negative reaction in the child who is not able to comply.

Often false expectations create the situation anticipated. For example, if a parent expects that a toddler can do little for herself and never gives her a chance to try to care for herself, this parent fosters dependency and guides the child into incompetency.

Fortunately, positive expectations operate in a similar way. When parents believe that their child is lovable, competent, and talented, that child blossoms and functions effectively. To foster expectations that are realistic and positive in nature, Briggs[5] suggests parents learn as much about healthy growth and development as possible, so that their expectations are based on knowledge. Then parents need to observe each child carefully and objectively, and they need to be aware of people, circumstances, and pressures the child encounters in daily life. Knowledge, observation, and understanding of each child's situation lead to realistic views that can then be tempered with an optimistic attitude. Ginott says that when parents behave as though their children have the abilities the parents want them to develop, the parents are encouraging the children to live up to their potential.

What parents expect of themselves

Most parents have high—and often unrealistic—expectations of themselves as parents. These expectations can be stumbling blocks to successful parenting, hindering rather than helping, so let us talk about them. The list of expectations discussed here is not an exhaustive one, and not all of these expectations are unrealistic. However, this discussion can help you to explore your own expectations and decide which you want to retain and which you want to discard.

Many parents expect that if they just love their children enough, they will have no problems. When problems do occur, parents are startled and uncertain about what action to take. Parental concern and acceptance are essential ingredients in children's lives, but love must be translated into sensitive caretaking. During the early years this includes the daily routines of dressing, bathing, and feeding. Toddlers and preschoolers need encouragement and stimulation. Elementary school children need help in adjusting to the outside world, and teenagers need to be allowed to make their own decisions and choices. Parents develop skills in interacting with children, and these skills enable parents to express their affection and warmth.

Many parents expect that if they devote enough time and energy and thought and caring to their children, all will go smoothly. Then they are confounded when problems occur anyway. When this happens, some parents assume that they must be doing something wrong or that they are inadequate for the task. In fact, however, parenting is a demanding form of interpersonal relations. It requires more energy than other life activities and can include some of the most frustrating problems encountered in a lifetime. Commitment to children involves an eighteen to twenty year relationship that cannot be ended except by abandonment. We can quit a job or end a marriage, but we cannot divorce our children.

Some parents expect that if they are effective, their children will be happy all the time. They believe that if children suffer or are sad they, as parents, are responsible and must quickly remedy the situation. Parents can try to design the family's living arrangments so that children are happy much of the time. But it is important to remember that many events and influences that are beyond parents' control can affect children and make them unhappy. Ginott notes that parents would be unwise to remove all suffering even if they could. Children grow through such experience.

Studies of representative samples of children report that the average child has several behavior problems at any given time. In a longitudinal sample,[6] children had between five and six problems per year. In a sample of several thousand children who were nine, ten, and eleven years old,[7] the average child had between three and four problems. Such problems, if not long lived or intense, appear to reflect the stress that accompanies even healthy development.

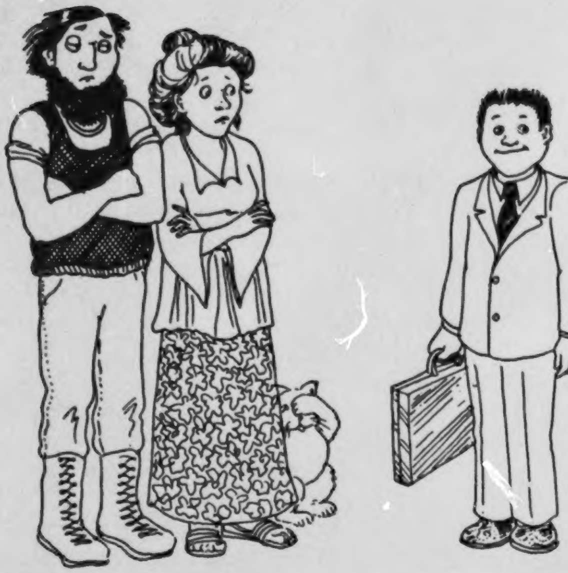
Many parents expect that they will always put their children's needs ahead of their own. The needs of children deserve special consideration, particularly in the early years when they are least able to take care of themselves. However, as children grow, much of what they may consider needs are really wants that can be deferred without harmful effects. Even real needs can occasionally await gratification. Yet parents often are reluctant to put their own desires and interests, and even needs, ahead of those of their children. Often, though, parents find that when they go to extremes to see that children get what they want, the children pay a price. Parents are likely to become resentful and angry at how much they are giving, and children sense this underlying hostility. Ginott remarks that parents can be a little kinder than they feel, but not much.

Another expectation many parents hold is that they will avoid all the mistakes their own parents made. Parents who wish they had had fewer limits will give their children more freedom; parents who had little real communication with their parents will engage their children in lively debates. The desire to improve on our own experiences in childhood motivates us to seek better ways to rear our children. It is just as important, however, to recognize the positive and beneficial aspects of our parents' childrearing philosophies and methods.

What parents expect of their children

Many parents have very specific expectations about the kind of people they want their children to become. Sometimes parents hope a child will grow up to be exactly like themselves and are surprised and disappointed when the child's temperament, skills, or interests are different from their own. When such parental expectations are expressed as demands, problems may result, as described in Chapter Fourteen. Problems also develop when parents expect children to succeed in ways—emotional, social, professional—that they, the parents, feel they have failed. For example, a parent who lacks self-confidence may encourage a child to be aggressive and outgoing. Parenting goes more smoothly when parents think of each child as a unique and separate individual who needs to become his or her own person.

Some couples expect that children will cheerfully do as they are told. If children comply grudgingly, parents may become annoyed. Thus, sometimes parents punish, not because of disapproved behavior, but because the child's attitude is not what they wanted. Such parents expect to control the child's behavior and all



of the child's thoughts, feelings and reactions. But this kind of control severely limits a child's responsiveness.

Parents sometimes expect children to be helpless, inadequate creatures who require continual help and direction in order to accomplish anything. They are often surprised at what babies and young children can do to meet some of their needs. Some psychologists, while emphasizing the child's early need for support and nurturance, have neglected to portray for parents the child's considerable abilities to learn, to adapt, to be productive. The more careful and complete studies of children's behavior document the child's capacities for complex, adaptive functioning, as we shall see in Chapter Six.

Another parental expectation is that children will understand and appreciate what parents do for them. But children often do not appreciate what parents do for them, in part because they do not have the range of experience necessary to do so. Many parents do without things they need or want, to save money for piano or dance lessons, for camp, or for dental care. Just as many spend precious hours as homeroom mothers and scout leaders. When a child has parents who do these things and does not know parents who are not giving and generous, the child may not realize how fortunate he is. Unless children observe parents who are different, children will take for granted rationality and consideration. Only later, when they are more experienced, do they value their parents' efforts to be giving and thoughtful. Parents need to understand that their children are not ungrateful, but only unaware.

Another expectation is that children will become what parents make them. John B. Watson,[8] a psychologist in the 1920s, set the stage for this belief with the statement that if given a dozen infants he could make of them whatever he wanted. More recently, psychologists have come to believe that the child's temperament is an important force in determining how external stimuli, including each parent's behavior, will affect the child.

A child's characteristics determine how a parent's behavior is interpreted. For example, a quiet, sensitive child may be deeply hurt by parental criticism that her more active, assertive sister barely notices. The parental behavior is the same, but each child has interpreted it in terms of her own personality. Further, a child's characteristic ways of behaving will elicit particular behaviors from parents.

Each of us has our own unique expectations of ourselves and our children. Briggs[9] presents a valuable method for identifying and assessing expectations:

> During the next few days, observe your behavior toward each child. Try to identify your expectations. Write each one down and look at it in the light of these questions.
>
> Why do I have this expectation?
> Where did it come from?
> What's in it for me?
> Is it based on my needs or my child's?
> What purpose does it serve?
> Does it realistically fit this particular child at this age and with this temperament and background?
>
> Check each expectation to see if it exists to meet your hidden hungers, hangover wishes, or unfinished business. Be careful, for it is easy to camouflage a need in yourself as a need in your child.

GUILT AND HOW TO LIVE WITH IT

What is guilt? Dorothy Rogers[10] has defined it as the "experience of negative self-evaluation sustained from failure to live up to some standard imposed on one either by himself or by others." When we do not meet our own expectations as parents, and when our children fall short of our expectations of them, we may feel guilty. This sense of guilt can be the biggest single obstacle to effective parenting.

It is important for parents to be sensitive to their behavior as parents as well as to the behavior of their children. The parent whose primary motivation is fear of doing the wrong thing will be less effective and less happy than the parent whose primary motivation is a desire to wisely nurture each child according to that child's needs and temperament.

Guilt makes parenting difficult and damages the parent-child relationship. Parents who feel guilty are likely to view a child's undesirable behavior as an indication of their failure as parents. Such parents are often angry and irritable, anticipating that at any moment a child may do something that reveals their inadequacies. Parents who feel guilty may feel so inept that they are unable to set limits or provide the kinds of discipline that children need and that are, in fact, expressions of love.

How can we cope with guilt? Perhaps the first step is to recognize that few if any parents avoid the experience of guilt—you are not alone in having to deal with this troublesome and obstructive emotion. If you can accept that, and can recognize that guilt diminishes rather than enhances your skills and effectiveness as a parent, then you can begin to examine the roots of your feelings of guilt and to devise more positive ways of thinking about your parenting.

One positive approach is to develop courage and self-confidence as a parent. As Dreikurs[11] has written:

> The importance of courage in parents cannot be overemphasized. Whenever you feel dismayed or find yourselves thinking, "My gosh, I did it all wrong," be quick to recognize this symptom of your own discouragement; turn your attention to an academic and impersonal consideration of what can be done to make matters better. When you try a new technique and it works, be glad. When you fall back into old habits, don't reproach yourself. You need to constantly reinforce your own courage, and to do so, you need the "courage to be imperfect." Recall to your mind the times that you have succeeded, and try again. Dwelling on your mistakes saps your courage. Remember, one cannot build on weakness—only on strength. Admit humbly that you are bound to make mistakes and acknowledge them without a sense of loss in your personal value. This will do much to keep your courage up. Above all, remember that we are not working for perfection, but only for improvement. Watch for the little improvements, and when you find them, relax and have faith in your ability to improve further.

But how? Shirley Radl[12] describes the process, learned from a friend, that she used to cope with self-hatred and to restore her confidence and self-esteem. Redl started with a session in which she forgave herself for all her past mistakes. She took the phone off the hook, went into her bedroom, sat down, and began to recall all the things she felt consciously guilty about. She began by forgiving herself for early mistakes as she was growing up because she felt these early guilts provided a basic reservoir of feeling that had to be eliminated. She said to herself, "I forgive you." After doing this she felt truly, deeply forgiven by herself.

She then began to go over her "motherhood guilt list." She divided the guilts into two piles—the ones she could control (providing good meals and good care) and the ones she could not control (birth complications, poor health). Then she began to examine her good points as a parent. She really loved her children, tried to be fair and understanding, and exerted effort toward being a good parent.

She then began a program to improve her behavior with her children, rewarding herself when she met her goals. She discovered that to be the kind of giving mother she wanted to be, she had to look after her own needs as well. She had to get plenty of rest, eat a healthy diet, and find time for relaxation. She concluded that when parents can care for themselves, they can rear their children more happily and effectively.

INFLUENCES ON PARENTING

Parents sometimes forget that although they are the most important single influence on their children, they are only one of many influences. Temperament, physical health, cultural values, and experiences in school are among the factors that influence a child's development. The child and the family are embedded in a social context that molds all members of the society. Examination of the social and cultural influences broadens our understanding of parenting.

Childrearing practices vary from one society to another. In societies with large (extended) families, in which other female relatives are present and can help out if the mother is sick, fathering and mothering are dissimilar.[13] In the United States today, we have small (nuclear) families, usually with only two generations living together. The husband must take on the wife's role if she is ill, and vice versa. Because there are no substitutes readily available, men and women must be versatile.

Parenting behaviors within our society have differed from one generation to the next,[14] and childrearing has changed radically over the years. In Europe there was no concept of childhood until about the seventeenth century. If children survived infancy, they were treated as adults. They wore adult clothes, were included in adult games, and were sent off to work when they reached seven or eight. Apprenticeship was the only form of schooling. Sometime in the seventeenth century there was a change, perhaps because of a decline in infant mortality, and families became closer and more concerned about the welfare of the children.

Until late in the nineteenth century, parents were most concerned about the physical survival of their children, rather than about effective parenting. And even children who survived infancy might have succumbed to disease at any time. Because of this there was great concern about the moral state of the infant and child. The doctrine of original sin suggested an evil nature that had to be subdued quickly. Parents were strict and punished the child for his or her own good.

During the early years of the twentieth century, this notion of an evil child was changed by the early behaviorists, particularly Watson. He believed, as did many psychologists, that children are "blank slates" who need to learn good habits. The behaviorists stressed the importance of parenting in determining how children would develop emotionally and intellectually. Watson wrote:

> There is a sensible way of treating children. Treat them as though they were young adults. Dress them, bathe them with care and circumspection. Let your behavior always be objective and kindly firm. Never hug and kiss them, never let them sit in your lap. If you must, kiss them once on the forehead when they say good night. Shake hands with them in the morning. Give them a pat on the head if they have made an extraordinarily good job of a difficult task. Try it out. In a week's time you will find how easy it is to be perfectly objective with your child and at the same time kindly. You will be utterly ashamed of the mawkish, sentimental way you have been handling it.[15]

Although this advice now seems extreme and even absurd, it is hard to exaggerate the impact the behaviorists had, here and in England. Mothers refused to feed their children even a few minutes before the end of the prescribed four-hour period and were afraid to hold and cuddle their babies. They were told that adherence to rigid rules was necessary if their children were not to go astray later in life.

In the 1930s and 1940s, two trends led away from such strict habit training.

Drawing on Freud's insights, psychologists began to urge parents to relax and permit children to grow without frustrations and repression of impulses. Parents were encouraged to be lenient and understanding, so that internal conflicts and neurotic symptoms would not develop. Also, at that time Arnold Gesell published norms of infant and child development. On the basis of observations of healthy, upper-middle-class children, Gesell concluded that the patterns for healthy growth were within the child, and that if the parents would relax, growth would occur naturally. Both Freud and Gesell stressed the importance of the natural child with natural impulses, a child who needed to be understood and gratified in certain ways. These views, in contrast with the rigid habit training of Watson, provided a welcome emphasis on the needs of the child.

In recent years we have moved away from these frameworks, for two reasons. First, research has shown that children need limits and more interference with their natural impulses than psychoanalysts in the 1930s and 1940s considered wise. We now believe that excessive parental permissiveness can create an intolerable child, and that such a child will be unhappy. Second, Gesell's emphasis on the growth process underemphasized the importance of the environment and of the parents in childrearing. Studies of children from all socioeconomic levels reveal that the environment can help or hinder the growth process within each child. If environmental factors prevent appropriate timing and sequencing of behavior development, some behaviors may never develop.

Two current developments in psychology have again altered our view of the nature of the child and the role of the parents. Jean Piaget,[16] a Swiss psychologist, describes the many differences between a child's thinking and an adult's logic. He emphasizes that children construct a view of the world based on their own experience with people and objects in the environment. Children must act in order to develop. They are curious investigators who adapt their thinking to fit their experiences, but at the same time, interpret their experiences in terms of their own way of looking at the world. Piaget asserts that children proceed through a predictable series of stages of cognitive development. Parents can provide experiences and opportunities that will enable children to develop a complex view of the world.

The ethological perspective in psychology has become an important influence in the past twenty years. Ethologists study human behavior in terms of its adaptive qualities. They are concerned with behaviors that may be built into the organism but that require environmental stimulation to develop fully. Critical periods of growth are studied to determine what happens if the environment does not permit behavior to develop. Ethologists believe that children have enormous potential, and that a stimulating environment is needed if children's capacities and abilities are to develop. That environment must include people who provide the emotional bonds and the environmental experiences that trigger and nourish the child's growth.

As our world changes, so too do the influences that affect parenting.[17] Changing economic conditions have increased the number of mothers who work while their children are small. Over one-third of mothers living with husbands and with children under three are now employed, as are over 50 percent of mothers living with husbands and with children between six and eighteen.[18] Percentages are higher for single-parent families. The rising divorce rate is another powerful influence on parenting. Children born in 1980 are expected to have a 40 to 50 percent chance of spending at least some time, during childhood, in a single parent family, and many of these will live in stepfamilies. Changes in parenting are discussed in Chapters Eleven, Twelve, and Thirteen.

BUILDING BLOCKS OF PARENTING

Modeling

The aim of parenting is to help children develop into independent, autonomous, responsible, and self-directed adults. All strategies emphasize that parents should provide models of the characteristics they want their children to develop. If parents do not provide guidance by personal example of their major values, it is difficult for any method to help a child grow in the desired ways. Shirley Gould,[19] a follower of Dreikurs, urges parents to ask themselves what they are doing in their day-to-day lives that they do not want their teen-age children to do. After thinking about this, parents must set about making appropriate changes in their behavior. Children living in families in which everyone eats healthy food and participates in regular exercise are likely to adopt healthy habits as they grow up. Similarly, if parents have a happy and satisfying relationship, their sons and daughters are likely to fashion relationships based on that model.

How do parents provide models for infants and toddlers? The behavior of an adult is so different from that of very young children. Yet mimicking of adult responses has been observed in infants who are just a few days old. When adults are completely unavailable, a baby's capacity to respond diminishes dramatically. We see this clearly in blind babies, whose initial smiling disappears because they cannot see the smiles of their parents, and in deaf babies, who cease their babbling when they do not hear sounds made by other humans. Babies need parents to model the smiles and laughter, the language and emotional responses of life.

During the early years, it is the quality of parental behavior that is important. Parents who express warmth, happiness, consideration and respect in their daily handling of the child, who are gentle and respond to children's needs with smiles and humor, help their children to develop a positive approach to life.

From time to time parents need to try to look at their own behavior through the eyes of their children, to see if they are providing appropriate models. A father who is eager to be a good provider, so that his family can enjoy life, may work long hours at one job or take a second. The children of this father may feel that he is a remote, overworked man who has little time for them, rather than a happy, responsible father. A mother who wants to create an organized, contented family atmosphere may work so hard cooking and cleaning that her children see a hurried, tense person who is bothered by children rather than pleased with them.

Trust

Parents need to have confidence that, given emotional support, their children will be able to cope well with the demands of family, friends, school, and society. When problems arise, children can learn new behavior patterns. They can meet problems and often can find solutions themselves. Very early in life children need to develop a basic sense of trust that those close to them will meet their needs. This will happen only as parents begin to build a basic trust in children's abilities to function effectively. Parents who have this trust are able to intervene, in whatever ways they choose, to influence their child's behavior—to set limits, shape behaviors, and engage in mutual problem-solving sessions.

Respect

Effective parents respect their children as human beings. Even the very young child is a separate person, with individual needs and preferences, not an object to be manipulated at will. Children need to be interacted with and talked to with as much courtesy and consideration as you would expect for yourself. When parents criticize children in front of company or strangers, or yell at children when their friends are visiting, they feel demeaned. Remember, respect begets respect.

Love/Discipline

Love is an essential part of the parent-child relationship. But parents who love their children are not automatically effective parents. Love must be expressed in ways that are beneficial for the children and comfortable for the parents. Remember that caring discipline is a form of love.

Communication

All the parenting strategies discussed in this book focus on communication between parent and child. Behaviorists do this less than others, but even they talk about the importance of expressing affection and positive feelings, smiling and hugging the child while giving material rewards. Each strategy suggests methods for improving communications between two members of the family, and all recommend family meetings. Gordon[20] calls these meetings mutual problem-solving sessions; Dreikurs calls them family councils; behaviorists[21] talk about contracting sessions. When parents and children discuss family rules, share points of view and reactions to each other, and plan joint activities, they are all participating in the creation of more comfortable living arrangements.

Honesty

All strategies recommend that parents be honest, specific, and clear about the changes they want a child to make. They must also strive to be honest with their children. Honesty means expressing your feelings as accurately as possible, and having your words match your tone of voice, gestures, and facial expression. When parents do not match their behaviors with their words as they go about setting limits, children get mixed messages. Either the child becomes confused or the child believes the parent's behavior. When children get too many mixed messages, they begin to distrust what parents tell them, or they begin to distrust their own perceptions. Either result presents problems.

Shame and blame

Do not use vague, descriptive terms that label the child—"Janet is a lazy child," or "Jim is aggressive and obnoxious," "Linda is loud and pushy," or "Joe is sneaky and mean." Instead, be specific about the behaviors you want changed, and, whenever possible, use positive terms—"I want Janet to get involved in a hobby and help me with household chores;" "I want Jim to be pleasant and sharing with his friends." To discover the specific causes of particular problems in the family, parents need to observe their children carefully. What do the children do that is upsetting? When does such behavior occur? What does the child seem to be feeling? What is the response of other people that prolongs this behavior? What specific purpose does the behavior appear to have for the child? The parent who ridicules or shames a child hurts that child emotionally, sometimes with more profound and long-lasting effects than physical punishment might cause. The words, even the tone of voice of a parent when belittling a child may remain with that child for the rest of his life. At the same time, the parent is diminishing the likelihood of open communication with the child, then or later.

Time, attention, and concern

The parent who wants to be effective must be willing to spend time, not only with the child but also in attending to, thinking about, and changing his or her own behavior as a parent. Adopting effective techniques takes time. You have to identify the problem and then find an appropriate strategy for dealing with it. But as a new strategy begins to work, you will find that you are spending less time arguing with children, settling conflicts, reminding children to do chores. Instead, the time is available for more pleasant activities—talking, working together, engaging in hobbies. Such shared activities build a reservoir of positive feelings that help both parents and children to solve conflicts. Ginott, Gordon, and Briggs stress the importance of parental awareness of the child's feelings. Dreikurs and the behaviorists are also concerned about feelings. Although Dreikurs emphasizes behavior, he also examines the feelings that lead to the behavior, and the feelings that the behavior produces.

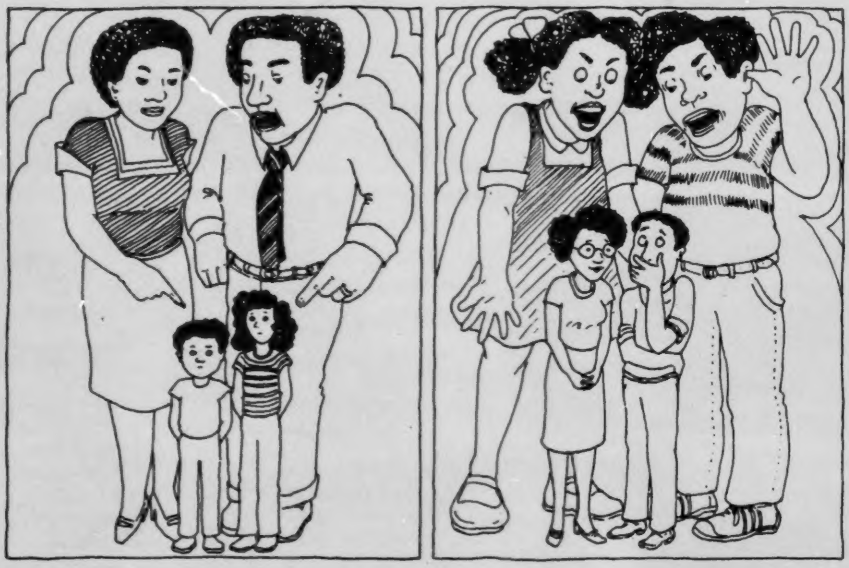
Parents' needs

Parents must consider their own needs as well as those of their children. When parents begin to look at their relationships with their children, they often discover that they are clear about children's needs, wishes, and feelings, but vague about their own. This is a situation that demands attention. If your needs are not met, you have difficulty meeting the needs of others.

DIFFERENCES AMONG STRATEGIES

Now we come to the areas of disagreement among the psychologists whose strategies are discussed in this book. How important are a democratic atmosphere, praise, impersonal statements of rules, consistency, and a positive view of the child? Only the behaviorists do not emphasize the importance of a democratic atmosphere, and even they tend to think it is important in the adolescent years. Gordon and Dreikurs are most specific on this point. Dreikurs asserts we live in a democratic society that requires democratic childrearing techniques. Gordon describes the problems of the authoritarian family and the permissive one. In the former, the parents win all the conflicts and dictate what happens; in the permissive family, children win the conflicts and become tyrants. Neither of these alternatives help children grow and develop. A democratic family in which everyone is entitled to express opinions and contribute to solutions is most congenial for rearing children.

All but Dreikurs suggest a form of praise that tells a child specifically what she has done well and why her behavior is valued. Ginott[22] pointed out that children recognize the insincerity of vague and extravagant praise, such as "You are wonderful!" or "You are an angel!" They realize it is inaccurate and feel ill at ease. Parents increase the child's self-confidence when they point to a specific act and describe its usefulness and value: "Thank you for helping with the dishes—now I can watch the news," or "I like the way you washed the car so carefully. It looks really clean." Dreikurs recommends encouragement (which is not the same



thing as praise) because it expresses a positive attitude whether a child is succeeding or is having difficulty.

All but Gordon emphasize an impersonal statement of rules to avoid power struggles and resentment. Parents are advised to phrase rules as general statements: "Bedtime is at eight in our house" and "We always wash our hands before meals." The rules are presented in this way so the child does not feel personally singled out. Such phrasing conveys that objective rules apply to all. Ginott adds that limits are more acceptable when they convey the function of an object. Instead of telling a child, "Don't stand on the chair," say "The chair is for sitting, not for standing."

All but Gordon agree on the importance of consistency. Gordon points out that parents cannot feel exactly the same way every day. One day they may be sensitive to noise or children fighting with each other, but the next day this might not be irritating. Gordon asserts that parents are being inconsistent if they accept one behavior at home and another in public, or one behavior in the house and another in the yard. Parents are likely to say that the particular situation is important in determining what is appropriate, rather than seeing these differences as forms of inconsistency.

Most people think that inconsistency means punishing or disapproving a behavior one day, but accepting it the next. When Gordon uses the term, he usually refers to responses to things like noise, and most strategies would accept inconsistency on that point. All agree that one must be consistent about major rules—not hitting other people, not destroying property, not running in the street, doing chores. This does not mean that one cannot ever make an exception to a rule for special circumstances, but generally consistency helps children learn.

All but the behaviorists have a very positive view of the child as a constructive, helpful individual, if the environment supports these traits. Dreikurs[23] writes, "Children don't need bribes to be good. They actually want to be good. Good behavior on the part of the child springs from his desire to belong, to contribute usefully, and to cooperate." The behaviorists do not take a stand on the positive or negative nature of the child.

There is also disagreement about providing choices, parents' expression of anger, distinguishing between the deed and the doer, the uniqueness of the child, preventive statements, and uses of specified rewards and specified punishments. These subjects and specific strategies for them are discussed in Chapters Three and Four.

The techniques discussed in this book are based on a set of principles that parents can draw on. Do these principles and strategies guarantee that childrearing will be peaceful and successful? Will life become dull and uninteresting? No! Research[24] suggests that families doing an effective job of rearing children are lively groups.

The members of such families have affiliative bonds with each other. They love and respect each other, but all are individuals and all are free to be open and honest. They value individual differences and consider many options when solving problems. Members of healthy families are active in meeting problems and show initiative. Often they are involved in community activities. Parents respect each other as individuals and present models of leadership to children. Power structure is clear, but parents negotiate problems when they arise. Family members are close, but all are encouraged to be individuals who accept responsibility for their acts. They are accurate in understanding each other, in part because they are able to communicate feelings and ideas. Healthy families are made up of individuals who share differing ideas and opinions in an accepting atmosphere. Disagreements occur, but they serve primarily to broaden points of view rather than stimulate conflict.

VALUES

Childrearing practices change from one generation to another. And the particular values of a cultural group within a society produce childrearing practices unique to that group and time. Thus, parents must be aware of their own values, as individuals and as members of a particular cultural group, if they are to select, from among the childrearing techniques available those that will help them to inculcate their values in their children.

Parenting is difficult because we cannot anticipate the society or environment in which our children will be living as adults. The world is changing so fast that our children may live in a very different society, one in which the values that have guided our lives are no longer useful or appropriate. For example, in a densely populated society, assertiveness and independence may not be valued as much as placidity and cooperativeness. How do you decide which values you want your children to live by? Some people stress achievement, others stress self-actualization, still others retreat to a simple life of work and meditation. This increase in the number of socially accepted values from which to choose can be confusing, even when you can expect support and reinforcement from the schools and other community institutions.

Until recently, few books or articles on parenting have addressed the particular problems of socioeconomic groups whose values and experiences differ from those of the middle-class. Comer and Poissaint's *Black Child Care,* [25] published in 1975, is one of the first. *Black Child Care* discusses ways to handle the child's reaction to her skin color, and how to cope with racial discrimination, for example, and contains sections on the ways that black experiences shape attitudes towards education and careers.

The heritage that you pass on to your children includes your physical characteristics and your personal values—the attitudes and beliefs and preferences that you carry into adulthood from your own childhoods. Your children may not adopt all of these for their own. Indeed, they may each go through a period when they seem to be rejecting most or all of what you hold dearest, but that is likely to be temporary. If you encourage your children to think for themselves, to become responsible for themselves, and to be individuals, they will, as they grow older, select from your values those they want to adopt for their own, and they will learn to respect you even as they learn to differ. If parents express interest, concern, and warmth for their children, the children will respond to them and will continue to desire satisfying relationships with their parents throughout their lifetimes.

SUMMARY

Parenting is a continuing series of interactions between parent and child, aimed at helping children to grow into healthy, independent, responsible adults. Parents' tasks are (1) to establish warm emotional ties with children, so that they can approach the world in a happy, positive way, and (2) to present limits within which children are free to explore and develop their abilities. When problems arise, we advocate using a problem-solving approach that requires identifying the problem, planning action, taking action, evaluating the results, and starting again if necessary. However, parenting is more than handling problems. Parents also help children develop their talents and abilities.

We have discussed how parents learn to be parents. We have examined the influential role that expectations play in shaping our experience of parenthood. We have looked at the negative effects of unrealistic expectations and described how parents can build positive and realistic expectations.

Parents are usually the most important single influences on children, but there are many other influences. Social, cultural, and economic forces affect parents and, in turn, children. Parents incorporate these influences into their own values and individual points of view.

Finally, we have reviewed the principles agreed upon by Ginott, Gordon, Dreikurs, and the behaviorists. Modeling the behaviors parents want children to adopt, trusting and respecting children, translating love into beneficial parenting techniques, communicating feelings, being specific about the changes desired in children's behavior, being honest and open with children, avoiding shame and blame—these are the building blocks of parenthood. Effective parents spend time and attention observing their children and using various strategies. Concern for the child must be matched by parents' concern for themselves, so that parents do not resent the efforts required to raise children. As parents learn about healthy growth and development and about the individual qualities of each child, and as they gain experience in setting limits, they too, will grow and mature.

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2

Parenting and the life cycle

We begin to learn about parenting while we are still children, from our parents, brothers and sisters. We may not be aware of the influence of these early experiences until we become parents. Then, we may find ourselves strongly moved to do one thing or another, or strongly resentful of some behavior of the other parent. When we examine the source of these reactions, we are often surprised. A childhood experience that did not seem traumatic or important when it occurred can, nevertheless, make an imprint that creates a subtle sense of what is appropriate behavior for a parent.

A life-cycle perspective focuses on the significant early stages we passed through on our way to adulthood and on the ways that these influence parenting. Moreover, it suggests how parents are changed by the process of parenting. Psychological development continues in adulthood. A major stimulus of growth and change, for both men and women, is the challenging process of rearing the next generation. Parenting is an intense experience that contributes to our evolution as individuals. This chapter examines the social and individual reasons for parenting and the effects of parenting on parents.

THE EIGHT AGES OF MAN

Erik Erikson,[1] a Freudian psychoanalyst with a strong interest in cross-cultural research and the social and cultural determiners of personality, has created a scheme for understanding life-span psychological development. He has worked on long-term studies of healthy children and adults. In the development of the eight stages of life, he has used his clinical experiences with patients, his knowledge of healthy growth and development, and his cross-cultural research.

Erikson speaks of three processes in development—the somatic (physical, physiological, bodily); the psychological (ego); and the social processes. He is concerned with the same bodily processes and pleasures—oral, anal, and genital—as was Freud. But Erikson also emphasizes the pleasures derived from the skin and the muscles involved in physical activity. Like Freud, Erikson is interested in the development of the ego, the directive part of the personality and with the ego crises that occur as the child grows. The individual develops in a family and in a society, and Erikson describes growth terms of the individual's interactions with other people and with the society at large.

Erikson conceives of growth as a series of stages (see Figure 2.1). In each stage, the individual has specific physical and psychological needs. Each stage has a developmental crisis that must be met and resolved. People have positive and negative experiences in satisfying needs, and both kinds of experiences are important for optimal development. If you have only positive gratifications, you never learn how to cope with difficulties. However, for healthy growth the balance should be on the positive side. When this occurs, a strength or virtue[2] develops.

Erikson does not believe that you solve each crisis once and for all. Later experiences can change earlier resolutions, for better or for worse. For example, stress during adulthood can disrupt mature ways of coping, so that for a brief period the individual may seem immature. Positive experiences in adulthood can reverse mistrust or doubt developed in childhood.

Let's look at each of the stages in Figure 2.1. In the first stage, which lasts for about the first year of life, the child is dependent on a mother or caretaker for food, clothing, warmth, and cuddling and reacts to the world by taking in food and absorbing outside stimuli. Infants can cry and draw attention to their needs, but those needs must be met by others. If the caretakers and other important persons in the baby's world are reliable and consistently give food, dry diapers, and cuddling, the baby develops trust and feels good about herself as a person deserving care. Of course, caretakers cannot always be prompt and satisfying, and all babies will have some experiences that lead to feelings of mistrust. It is important to develop some mistrust, because everyone is not completely trustworthy. When most experiences are positive and basic trust develops, children develop the strength or virtue of hope—the enduring belief that even though things are dark and gloomy, wishes and desires can be achieved. Difficulties later in life can often be traced to poor interactions with people during this period.

The second of Erikson's stages takes place in the second and third years of life. Children have matured physically and have learned to walk and climb. They begin to express their basic sense of self in their verbal "No's" and "Do it myself." The child's delight in independence is seen in the desire to do things by herself—to go where she wants, eat what she wants, get what she wants, and influence other

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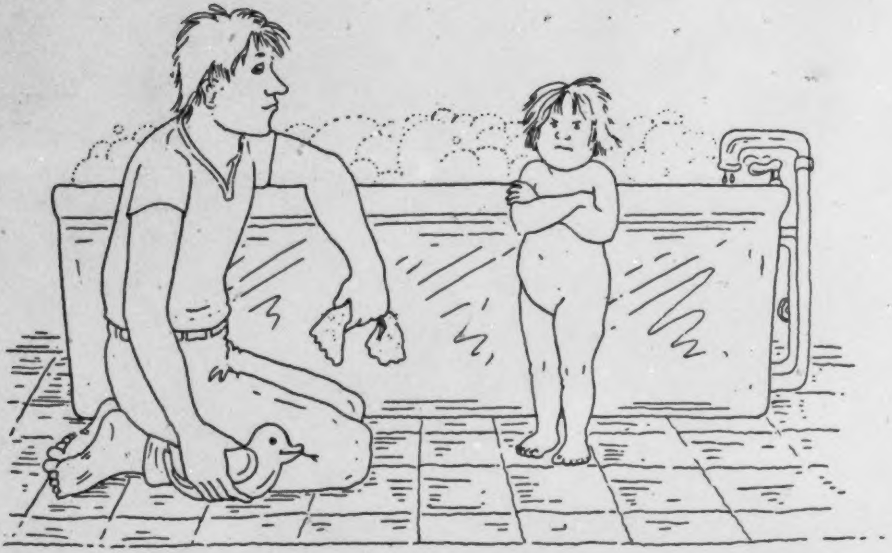
FIGURE 2-1
ERIKSON'S EIGHT STAGES OF GROWTH

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
							Integrity vs. Despair (Wisdom)
						Generativity vs. Stagnation (Care)	
					Intimacy vs. Isolation (Love)		
				Identity vs. Identity diffusion (Fidelity)			
			Industry vs. Inferiority (Competence)				
		Initiative vs. Guilt (Purpose)					
	Autonomy vs. Shame, doubt (Will)						
Trust vs. Mistrust (Hope)							
1. 0-1	2. 1-3	3. 3-5	4. 5-12	5. 12-19	6. 19-	7.	8.

Years



people. If parents encourage this behavior and provide opportunities for self-direction, children gain control over their bodies and themselves. They develop a sense of autonomy, of being able to act independently. Failures occur, and parents are not always supportive and patient as children go at their own pace and do what they want. If failure and frustration occur often, children develop a sense of shame and doubt about themselves and their abilities. If most experiences are positive, children develop strength of will, the resolution to make free choices and to act with self-control.

Just as children are establishing a sense of independence and assertiveness, they are asked to give up this heady sense of freedom and conform to parents' wishes about toilet training. This is the child's first major confrontation with the demands of society. In the first year of life, children had to learn to get food according to the rules of society, but they had few choices because parents controlled the food. In this second stage, parents must have the cooperation of their toddler. They cannot force the child to give up bodily products. The child can retain these and become constipated, or release them at the wrong time or place. Successful training comes about as a result of cooperation between parents and the child. It is not surprising that children do not want to give up their new independence and conform to parental requests. However, most do within a reasonable period of time, and almost all do eventually.

In the third stage, usually in the fourth and fifth years, children have gained control over their bodies, have a good grasp of language, and are ready to plan and direct self-initiated activity. They are active and curious. Their language skills are well developed, and they explore the world with questions. Parents are continually asked to explain the most everyday events—"Why do we have cereal for breakfast?" or "Why does the milkman bring milk?" as well as the mysteries of life, "Where is God and can He look in the car and see *me* riding?"

This is the period of the Oedipal and Electra complexes. A boy experiences a romantic attachment to the mother, whom he wishes to marry, and a girl goes through a romantic attachment to the father, whom she wants to marry and have all to herself. Children give up these dreams of married life with the opposite-sex parent because of fear of punishment and abandonment by the parents. As children accept the commands of parents and society, the superego develops and becomes an integral part of the child's personality. If parents criticize children's activities, ridicule their fantasies, and refuse to answer questions, children develop guilt and feel that what they make and what they do is bad. If most experiences at this stage are positive, children develop strength of purpose, the ability to set goals and pursue them, free of fears of failure, punishment, or criticism.

In the fourth stage, from five or six to eleven or twelve years, children are expanding their skills and abilities. They go off to school, learn to read and write, take up hobbies, start lessons, and join groups. They are busy and productive, and they experience pleasure in what they can do and produce. If they have few experiences of success and accomplishment, they develop a sense of inferiority; they feel their efforts are doomed to failure and that they are useless. Erikson talks about the widening world of children, who now spend significant portions of each day in places away from home, particularly in school. In addition, children are coming into contact with many adults besides the parents—teachers at school, coaches on athletic teams, teachers who give special lessons, adults at Sunday schools. Thus, the children have an increasing number of adult models for what they do. If the balance of experiences is positive, children develop a sense of competence—the feeling one can use one's skills and abilities to accomplish goals, free of feelings of inferiority.

From the earliest days of infancy each child has been developing a sense of an individual, unique self. By the end of this period, they have evolved, from babies who could not even sit up alone, into children who read, write, get about on their own, spend significant amounts of time away from home, possess various skills and have friends who may be as important to them as any family member.

Children must now incorporate sexuality into the evolving sense of self. This is the task of the adolescent years—to integrate all previous experiences with a blossoming sexuality and increased intellectual competence, to form a psychosocial identity that will permit the individual to meet the tasks of adulthood. Erikson uses the word "identity" to refer to a sense of sameness and continuity of the self—the real inner me who thinks, perceives, feels, and experiences life in an active, vital way. This feeling, according to James, includes "an element of active tension, of holding one's own, as it were, and trusting outward things to perform their part so as to make a full harmony, but without any guarantee they will."

In addition to sexual and intellectual influences, Erikson emphasizes we incorporate social values in our individual identities. For example, we all incorporate, in our individual ways, society's views of what men are, what women are, what members of our race and religion are.

Individuals need to have their identities validated and confirmed by their parents and the society. If teen-agers are unable to integrate previous life experiences with their emerging capacities and obtain confirmation from others that they are who they think they are, role confusion results. They remain uncertain of who they are and where they are heading. Lack of identity hampers future development as there is neither a sense of direction nor a push for productive action. Everyone experiences doubts about who they are and where they are going during the teen years. However, these doubts usually pass and gradually adolescents integrate their past experiences and present feelings and abilities to establish a stable sense of identity.

When life events and family members have not been supportive, an individual may develop a negative identity. He or she may become a delinquent, a dropout, a person who feels unable to do anything positive. This happened in the 1960s, when teenagers rebelled against their parents but could not find desirable alternative models. When the balance of the experiences is on the positive side and a sense of identity is formed, the virtue that develops is fidelity—what Erikson describes as faithfulness and loyalty to one's choices, whether they are persons, goals, or ideals.

In the first five stages, children grow from dependence on others into individuals able to trust themselves to get around independently in the world, able to initiate and sustain activities and to form a stable, realistic identity. The first stage of adulthood is the establishment of intimate personal ties. Once individuals know who they are, they can enter into relationships that are freely chosen. Erikson talks in greatest detail about intimacy in heterosexual relationships, but he also speaks of intimacy with co-workers and friends. Intimacy is not confined to the marital setting, but he uses the marital ties to illustrate the important processes of intimate relationships—the mutuality and surrender of the self to the other person and the relationship. Without a stable sense of identity, the individual has nothing to surrender.

Everyone goes through periods of separation from others. However, when persons are not sufficiently trusting of themselves or others to initiate and continue intimacy, then feelings of isolation and loneliness become marked. The ability to be close to other people leads to love—sharing of identities between friends and partners. This is a freely chosen, active love and involves transferring the love experienced in the developing years of childhood to adult relationships that are actively sought and of mutual concern to the two partners.

The second stage of adulthood is the initiation of generativity, or the creation of new life. This has, for women, most often occurred in the family setting. Children, the creations, are nurtured and guided to adulthood. Men are generative in their work, where they create new products and new ideas. In the past psychology as a science has not considered the father's role in child development as carefully or meaningfully as necessary. Nevertheless, the generative activities of many men have centered on the family. Plays and novels, as well as psychodynamic theories, have described the impact of the father and his behavior on the development of his children. But well-controlled studies did not focus attention on the father's role until the past fifteen years. However, parenting is a significant activity for both men and women. A recent survey[3] found that about 60 percent of the respondents of each sex reported that the family provided the greatest source of satisfaction in life.

Erikson believes the needs of each generation are interdependent. Adults need to teach and to nourish others. Children need guidance and care, and adults need to give nourishment to them. The lives of the two generations are interwoven in these activities. Generativity includes caring for the children and work that have been created. The virtue that develops in this period is care—concern and attention to what has been created, even if this requires sacrifice. If you do not learn to care for people or to work outside yourself, Erikson believes you then become a pet, or a child, to yourself.

In these first two stages of adulthood, the emphasis is on integration of the self with others—with intimate peers and children—and with social and economic activities. In the eighth stage of life, the focus is on the individual and the development of a sense of ego integrity. Erikson writes,

> Only in him who in some way has taken care of things and people and has adapted himself to the triumphs and disappointments adherent to being the originator of others or the generator of products and ideas—only in him may gradually ripen the fruit of these seven stages. I know no better word for it than ego integrity . . . It is the acceptance of one's one and only life cycle as something that had to be and that, by necessity, permitted of no substitutions: it thus means a new, a different love of one's parents. It is a comradeship with the ordering ways of distant times and different pursuits.[4]

In this eighth stage, individuals must come to terms with their lives and be satisfied with who and what they are and what they have done. They might have hoped to scale higher mountains or developed different kinds of relationships, but they need to feel they can accept their lives. If people cannot accept their own life experiences as important and meaningful, they suffer from despair because there is not time to start again. The virtue or strength that develops during this period is wisdom, deep understanding of life that is enriched by coming to terms with the prospect of one's own death. Again in this stage there is concern with the interlocking of the generations. Erikson points out that children will be able to face life if elders can face death. Physical activity may decline with age, but if older people develop wisdom and broad concern with life and the coming generations, they contribute in significant and important ways to the life experience of all generations.

Erikson links the experience from youth to old age with the word *care:* "In youth you find out what you care to do and who you care to be—even in changing roles. In young adulthood you learn who you care to be with—at work and in private life, not only exchanging intimacies but sharing intimacy. In adulthood, however, you learn to know what and whom you can take care of."[5]

Examining the ego qualities and the virtues of each stage, we can see that Erikson describes the growth of active, adaptive individuals who are independent, giving, and concerned with other people and the world around them. Erikson writes that in adulthood, one has "to balance its [death's] certainty with the only happiness that is lasting: to increase, by whatever is yours to give, the good will and the higher order in your sector of the world. That to me, can be the only adult meaning of that strange word *happiness*."[6]

Although Erikson's theory describes a series of stages, he asserts that each individual develops at his or her own rate, and that unforeseen occurrences—illness, death, historical events—have sudden impacts that change the life course. The qualities of hope, will, and purpose are particularly important in enabling people to survive the unplanned crises and to cope with the troubles that are part of life.

An important feature of the theory is its emphasis on mutuality. In mutual relationships, people meet each other's needs and stimulate capacities for positive growth. Mutuality is seen from the time of birth, as mothers and babies respond to each other's behavior in a meaningful pattern of interactions. For example, the baby's cries stimulate the mother to care for the child, and this act of caring brings satisfaction first to the baby, and then to the mother who is rewarded by the child's gratification. Mutuality is seen throughout the life span, first in child-parent relationships, then in peer relationships, in the intimacy of adult relationships, and again in parent-child interactions.

Mutuality can also be used to describe the relationships of individuals to social institutions. Institutions must operate so that people are strengthened and, in turn, people need to behave so that institutions are strengthened.

Erikson's scheme of life cycle experience can help you understand the path that has brought you to adulthood. It can provide insight into stages of childhood that may have been especially difficult for you and the qualities that you developed as a result. For example, a mother coming from a protective, close family may have found it difficult to separate herself from the family in adolescence and to establish a solid identity. As an adult she may be especially sensitive in relationships where her individuality is not respected and where she feels overprotected. A father may, as a child, have been give little freedom to start activities on his own; perhaps he was always told what to do as though he knew very little. As an adult he may be slow to start projects, overly eager to get others' opinions and reassurances. These difficulties may not be serious, but as a parent he may wish he could change these qualities. Insight into the origins of behavior may stimulate change. No matter how loving and effective our parents may have been or how beneficial the external, environmental factors in our lives, we all have some idiosyncrasies that can be traced back to difficult experiences in these childhood stages.

Conversely, we all have strengths that can be understood in terms of Erikson's stages. A father who grew up in a large family, where infant needs were met with love and laughter and each child was given a lot of individual attention, is likely as an adult to have an optimistic, hopeful outlook on life—no matter how difficult times get, he maintains a cheerful attitude and works to solve the problems. A mother who, as a child, was given freedom to choose what she wanted to do and opportunities to explore her world, as an adult, is likely to set goals for herself and to have a sense of purpose about what she does. She always has something she wants to accomplish, and she takes pleasure and pride in what she does.

It is worthwhile to spend some time looking at our lives in terms of our strengths and the kinds of experiences and parenting that helped to shape us. We sometimes spend hours outlining our faults and tracing them back to experiences in childhood, vowing that we will not make the same mistakes with our children. There are too few times when we examine our childhood experiences in terms of our sources of strength, looking at our parents to see how they helped us to develop what we value in ourselves now.

Erikson's scheme enables us to see the relationship between individual psychological development and the social setting in which it occurs. Using his theory, we can expand our view of all the factors that affect growth and development and see the interlocking of the individual with institutional forces. For example, when we must work because of economic reasons or are encouraged to work by social values, then there is an effect on the individual child, who is locked into a social and cultural unit that shapes behavior.

Erikson's theory gives us valuable insights into the psychological importance of parenthood. During parenthood we can express powerful needs to nourish and guide the next generation. David Gutmann,[7] a psychologist, describes parenthood as the activity that distinguishes adulthood from all other stages of life. From interviews and testing in many other cultures, he has come to understand the powerful impact parenting has on both men and women. He writes, "For most adult humans, parenthood is still the ultimate source of the sense of meaning. For most adults the question 'What does life mean?' is automatically answered once they have children; better yet, it is no longer asked."[8]

REASONS FOR HAVING CHILDREN

Adults have children for many reasons that they often find hard to verbalize. Children bring opportunities for sharing love and affection. Parents may want to give a child the kinds of happy experiences they had as children. Contributing to the growth and development of very special individuals gives a sense of participating in the life process that is very satisfying. We have a sense of community with people in other generations and other times. We enjoy children's fresh perspectives on people and events, and we marvel at their energy and persistence and at their pleasure in the simple things of life. Observing our children as they experience the arrival of a new brother or sister, start school, achieve a desired goal, and fall in love, we can relive these long ago events of our own childhoods, and we sometimes gain new insights into ourselves and the meanings of these experiences for us. We also grow as we meet the many challenges associated with parenting.

Considering the importance of children in our lives, there have been relatively few studies on the value of children to parents. We know adults want children—very few (about 3 to 5 percent) plan childlessness. Yet we have little specific information about why parents value children. Lois Hoffman and Martin

Hoffman,[9] in a review of available studies, describe nine groups of reasons for having children: (1) adult social status and identity; (2) expansion of the self, ties to a larger entity, immortality, (3) morality, religion, altruism, good of the group, norms regarding sexuality; (4) primary group ties, affiliation; (5) stimulation, novelty, fun; (6) creativity, accomplishment, and competence; (7) power, influence, effectiveness; (8) social comparison, competition; and (9) economic utility.

Some people have children to establish that they are stable adults. Parents, relatives, friends expect that children will follow after marriage, and adults oblige to meet social expectations. This has been particularly true for women, who are taught from childhood that their destiny and purpose in life is motherhood. As small girls they think about being mothers and form their identities in terms of loving and caring for others, particularly children.

A second group of values centers on parenting as a way of developing the self, linking oneself with the community. Rearing children stimulates the development of personal characteristics, such as selflessness, responsibility, and sensitivity. In addition, as parents care for children, they express previously untapped talents and develop new abilities. Parents become skilled storytellers, superb negotiators, and spontaneous teachers. Parenthood also expands the self-concept by linking the parent to other people in a close family setting and in the larger social community. It is sometimes only because of children that adults take active roles in community activities. Children are also a link with generations yet unseen, and for some parents they provide a sense of immortality.

Parenthood is for some an expression of religious and moral beliefs. Many people equate motherhood with virtue and fatherhood with respect and authority. Children are viewed as manifestations of God's blessing and God's will. Individuals not connected with any formal church may consider having children a sign that they are more altruistic, less selfish and less egocentric than those who remain childless. In some subcultures and some countries, parenthood is a social obligation, a means of sustaining the culture and increasing its numbers.

Children are valued as sources of interpersonal satisfaction and affiliation. A couple who have a child become a family unit, which is seen as a defense against loneliness, isolation, and anonymity in our society. For women, particularly, children may be primary providers of affection and warmth. Children may be seen as compensation for difficulties between the parents and for lack of affection in the marriage. In the event of divorce, they become even more important as sources of love. Some single people seem to be having children to create someone to love. Many teenagers and unmarried women have said they want a child to love because they have never really loved anyone else, and they have never had just one person to whom they could feel completely attached.

A fifth group of reasons for having children are related to desires for increased stimulation, fun, and novelty. Several studies provide evidence that both men and women feel that children are fun, and a source of happiness. In addition, children may help to keep a balanced perspective in a home because they impose a routine in family life and help parents to forget outside troubles. Children distract you from your own worries. And parents sometimes find it easier to worry about children's behavior problems than about their marriage or job or their own personal problems.

Having children is a creative act, biologically and psychologically. As we help our children to grow and develop, we experience pleasure and achievement. Parental efforts help children to develop abilities and avoid pitfalls. The role of parent can contribute significantly to an individual's feelings of competence and accomplishment.

In some countries, and in some subcultures in our country, children bring power to the parent, particularly the mother. Mothers who have been subservient in the marriage relationship may, at times, have the courage to make demands for their children. Both mothers and fathers may derive a sense of power from being responsible for their children. Some adults have few opportunities to achieve power, and control over children may give them their only experience of it. This can result in problems if such parents feel they have the right to order, control, and direct their children without considering the needs and wishes of the children.

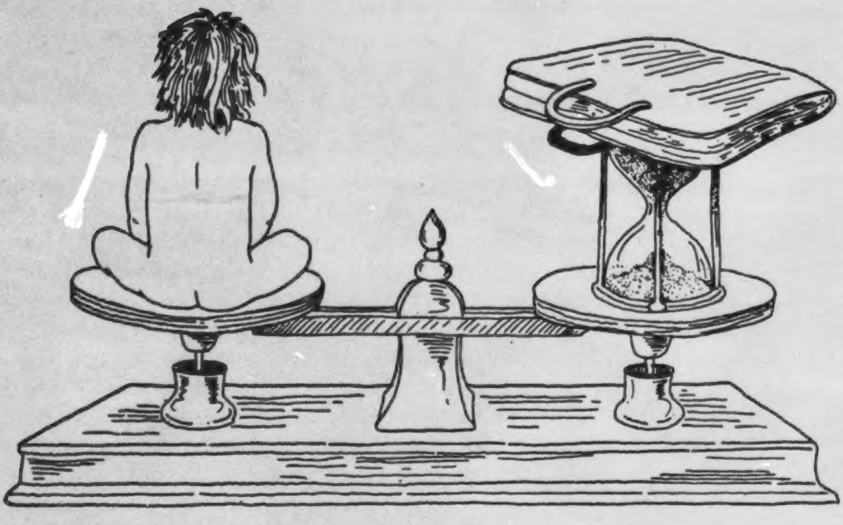
Children can serve as sources of prestige and competitive advantage. Sometimes these are achieved by having many children—more than one's parents, brothers, or sisters. As children grow, their achievements are sources of pride and can be compared with the achievements of children of friends and relatives. Medals won in athletic or scholastic competitions, entry to prestigious colleges or graduate schools, creative efforts—all these bring prestige to parents. Children are seen as extensions of their parents, who bask in reflected glory. If this is carried to an extreme, it can be dangerous for children and for the quality of the parent–child relationship. If children are valued only because of their objective achievements, they feel unimportant as individuals and the parent–child relationship is disrupted. The children become angry, and rightly so. Parents don't need to have outstanding achievements to merit the respect and love of their children. Similarly, children should be valued as people, not as trophy winners. Some children are pushed to live out the fantasies of their parents. The parent whose child does not comply with such wishes is disappointed with his own life and compounds his disappointment by diminishing the parent–child relationship.

A ninth value of children has been economic utility. In the past, especially in agrarian societies, children were valued as laborers who contributed to the family's productivity. More recently, grown children have been the caretakers of aged parents and less fortunate relatives, but today these responsibilities are beginning to be assumed by governmental agencies. And now that the cost of raising a child through age eighteen is about $100,000[10] for a middle-class family in New York, children are an economic burden rather than a utility.

If any of the values discussed above are emphasized in the extreme, difficulty in the parent–child relationship can occur. Yet all these values are probably present, in varying degrees, in each family.

THE DECISION TO PARENT

Improvements in contraception and the legalization of abortion have made it possible for couples to have only planned, wanted babies. The life experience of a planned, wanted child can be and usually is different from that of an unplanned, unwanted child. A Swedish study[11] of children whose mothers had requested but



were denied abortions found that these unwanted children had more insecure childhoods, received more psychiatric treatment and more public assistance, engaged in more delinquent acts, and obtained less education than the wanted children with whom they were compared.

Today many couples find that both husband and wife must work if they are to have sufficient incomes. Women have more opportunities than ever before to work at creative and rewarding jobs. And there is increasing concern about population growth. These factors have led many couples to think carefully about whether they want to have children.

Several books address the problems a couple faces in making this decision. Ellen Peck and William Granzig[12] are the authors of *The Parent Test: How to Measure and Develop Your Talent for Parenthood.* Elizabeth Whalen[13] has written *A Baby? . . . Maybe.* And Marilyn Fabe and Norma Wikler[14] have written *Up Against the Clock,* a discussion of the issues faced by women in their thirties who are concerned about deciding before they are too old to safely bear children. All these books stress that couples cannot predict exactly how they will react to having a child or to being parents. Each couple can examine the questions, and can try to get information and relate it to their own experiences and personalities and values, but none can do more than make an educated guess about the satisfactions they will have with children and parenthood.

Peck and Granzig's book rests on the belief that every child "should be planned in a more careful way than anyone has ever previously suggested." In addition to reviewing reasons for wanting children, they present the problems of rearing children—the financial strains, the time pressures, the psychological stresses. They believe that our culture glamorizes parenting and that many people have children without really understanding what they are undertaking. These authors explore the resources, skills, interests, and motivations required for parenting, and they urge prospective parents to examine themselves to determine if they possess these qualities.

All parents need good health, psychological stability, and adequate financial resources. Peck and Granzig suggest that parents also need patience, flexibility, independence, generosity, an optimistic outlook, and a sense of humor. Will a couple mind the routines, the repetitions of rules, stories, and directions, and the frustrations of dealing with children? Will they be selfless enough to subordinate their own needs and desires to those of their children? Will they be able to care for sick children, to settle disputes between siblings, to teach their youngsters how to fly a kite or to value beauty and friendships? If they do not have these qualities, are they willing to develop them?

Included in the book are six questionnaires to help couples enhance their "aptitude for parenting." Scoring is determined by contrasting successful parents (rated by themselves, their children, peers, and professionals) with parents who were not satisfied and would not have children if they could start again.

For individuals who do not score high on the tests but believe they truly want to be parents, Peck and Granzig have suggestions about ways to develop interests and qualities related to successful parenting. Parents can develop knowledge and interest in children by babysitting with the children of friends, by volunteering time to recreational projects for children, by joining Big Brothers or Big Sisters, or by becoming foster parents. A couple can begin to create a lifestyle that would enhance the lives of children, perhaps by moving to an area where they would like to raise children, and by saving money. They can imagine how their lives would change concretely if they had children and make some changes in the present. All these activities would help a couple see whether parenthood would be an enjoyable activity even if their scores on the tests were low. In fact, with these life changes, the scores would change too.

Marilyn Fabe, Norma Wikler, and Elizabeth Whelan are professional women in their late twenties or early thirties who were undecided about whether to have children. Seeking answers to their own questions, the three carried out a series of interviews with women who had and had not had children. Fabe and Wikler describe their conclusions in *Up Against the Clock*, and Whelan wrote *A Baby? . . . Maybe*. Fabe and and Wikler's sample was made up of well-educated, middle- and upper-middle-class women. They focused on the effects of the decision about children and on ways of easing the transition to parenthood. Whelan has a slightly broader social sample and includes men as well. She tends to focus on the process of making the decision about children. She has supplemented her interviews with a thorough reading of the available literature.

Fabe and Wikler describe four factors that affect how a working mother will adapt to children: (1) the demands of her work, (2) her attitudes about her job, (3) her use of child care, (4) and her personal reaction to motherhood. Women whose jobs permitted flexibility in determining a work schedule, who could take leaves or could work part time had an easier time adjusting to the demands of motherhood. However, these women had to modify their attitudes toward work so that they could feel satisfied with a decreasing commitment to it, at least while their children were very young. Women who had access to good child care, whose husbands participated in parenting, and who felt comfortable relying on others to help in caring for their children made an easier transition to parenthood. Finally, women who most wanted to have children enjoyed them the most.

Fabe and Wikler devote a significant section of their book to single women who became mothers. The success of these mothers depended in large part on their ability to build a support system that enabled them to successfully combine work and rearing children. Some lived in communes, others were able to gather support from friends and family. Although these women clearly made sacrifices to have children, they felt the rewards more than compensated for the difficulties. Some of the women worried about the effects of father-absence on their children, but most believed that the love and care of a single parent were beneficial and equal to the care provided by many divorcing families.

Most of the women who did not have children had arrived at this decision gradually. The primary reason for not having children was that the women had evolved a happy, satisfying life that included a strong commitment to work and relationships, and they did not feel the need for children. However, their decisions seem in part to be influenced by earlier events. Many report difficult relationships with their own families in childhood, problems they did not want to duplicate. These women nurture and guide people in other ways and feel they are satisfying the need to be generative through these activities.

Whelan suggests guidelines similar to those of Peck and Granzig for making the decision to parent or not to parent. However, Whelan stresses the very personal nature of the decision. She encourages parents to talk to older parents with similar interests, to determine their satisfactions with having children. She suggests that this should be a personal decision, rather than one based on test scores. While it is important to be aware of the problems children bring, couples must also think of the pleasures, which cannot be experienced in advance as easily as the limitations. The cuddling, hugging, loving; the warm sense of community with other people and other families; the pleasure and closeness that comes with watching children grow; the possibility of mastering upsetting experiences of our own—all these are hard to duplicate in experiences with other people's children.

All three of the books concerning the decision to parent suggest that couples and individuals will be best prepared to make decisions about children if they (1) learn exactly what childrearing involves, (2) examine their own interests and their motivations for having children, (3) plan how they will modify their work commitments and interpersonal relations to include a child, and (4) consider relying on help from partners, child care providers, and a support system.

All three books comment on the gradual nature of the decision not to have children. One social scientist[15] describes a four-step sequence often mentioned in the interviews presented in the books: (1) postponing children for a definite period, (2) postponing children for an indefinite period, (3) considering the possibility of not having children, and (4) making a definite decision not to have children. Some women know from an early age that they do not want children, but most report going through a sequence similar to that just described.

These books say little about health as a factor in the decision. Peck and

Granzig mention energy level as a prerequisite for rearing children. However, many physical conditions, particularly if the mother has them, will result in making a decision not to have children. Women with diabetes and hypertension may want to have children, but will time their pregnancies so their health is at its best. Family history of genetic diseases like Tay-Sachs disease (which results in the early and difficult death of the child), osteogenesis imperfecta ("brittle bone" disease, which results in many breaks and early death) will be a factor in the decision. Genetic counseling can help couples who have a history of such problems to obtain information and to sort out their feelings about the information.

TEEN-AGE PARENTS

The largest segment of the population having unplanned, and in many instances unwanted, pregnancies is made up of teen-agers. Surveys indicate[16] that about one million teen-agers between fifteen and nineteen get pregnant each year. About six hundred thousand girls under twenty have babies each year, and many of the babies are born to single mothers or to women who have married because they are pregnant. These couples take on parenthood under difficult conditions. Because they frequently do not get good prenatal care and are physically less mature, teen-age mothers suffer more pregnancy complications, and more often have babies with problems. Prematurity and low birth weight—which increase the likelihood of cerebral palsy, mental retardation, and epilepsy—occur most frequently in the babies of teen-age mothers. In addition, because they are emotionally immature and have fewer social and psychological supports, adolescent parents are more likely to abuse or neglect their children.

Once an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy has occurred, choices with widely different outcomes are available. None is without psychological costs. A woman can have an abortion, and about three hundred thousand do each year. Or a woman can carry the child to term and either give the baby up for adoption or rear the child herself. Abortions are sometimes the most reasonable solutions, but recent research suggests they have some negative, long-term effects. Preliminary studies[17] indicate that women who have had abortions have 30 to 35 percent more miscarriages in later pregnancies than women who have not had abortions. However, if teen-agers bear and keep children, they need help in coping with the practical problems of living and skillful counseling to help them become effective parents. Professionals have often underestimated the needs of adolescent parents. Those in the helping profession must recognize the long-term social and psychological support required if adolescent parents are to avoid the problems currently associated with very young parents.

PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

We all have the potential for developing the qualities of successful parents, although we differ in the ease with which we learn. No matter how inadequate for the job we may feel, we can handle the task with self-observation, a strong desire to do well, and a willingness to learn new skills. Peter De Vries quipped that "The value of marriage is not that adults produce children but that children produce adults."

When a couple takes an active role in choosing to be parents and in the delivery process, they are likely to maintain this active approach and to seek their own answers on childrearing matters, rather than quickly turning to experts. Many parents who enjoyed the exchange of information and the sharing of experiences in childbirth classes are now forming parent support groups. Members of many such groups are relying less on professionals and more on their own reactions and intuitive responses to the process of parenting. Some new books on childrearing—for example, *Ourselves and Our Children* by the Boston Women's Health Collective[18] and *The Inner Parent* by Isaacs and Keller[19]—focus on the parents' responses to their own parenting experiences. Parent groups that emerge from childbirth classes are helping parents to cope with the demands of infancy and, as the babies grow, with the problems of older children.

TRANSITION TO PARENTHOOD

Stress

The arrival of a baby changes every aspect of married life, from finances to sex life to sleeping habits to social life. No matter how much a couple may want their new baby, no matter how carefully and completely they have planned for the infant's arrival, they will experience stress.

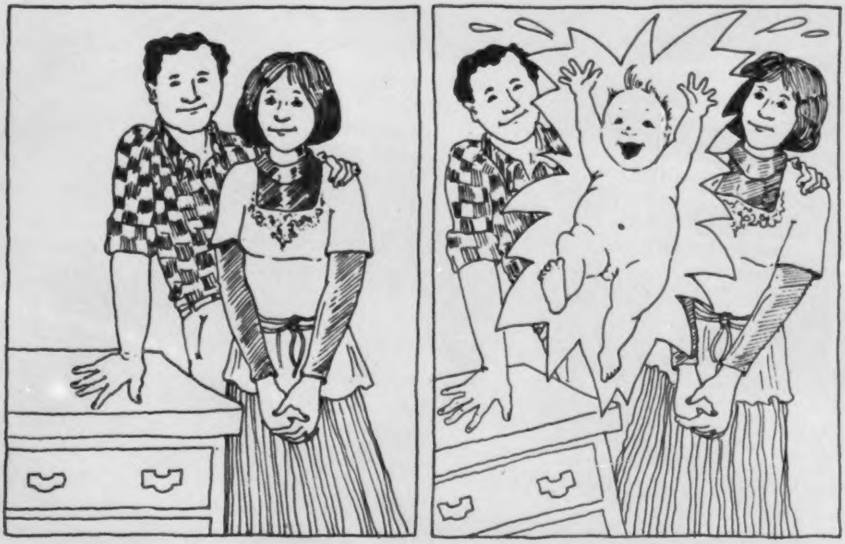


TABLE 2-1
THE STRESS OF ADJUSTING TO CHANGE

Event	*Scale of impact*
Death of spouse	100
Divorce	73
Marital separation	65
Jail term	63
Death of close family member	63
Personal injury or illness	53
Marriage	50
Fired at work	47
Marital reconciliation	45
Retirement	45
Change in health of family member	44
* Pregnancy	40
* Sex Difficulties	39
* Gain of new family member	39
Business readjustment	39
* Change in financial status	38
Death of close friend	37
Change to different line of work	36
Change in number of arguments with spouse	35
Mortgage over $10,000	31
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30
* Change in responsibilities at work	29
Son or daughter leaving home	29
Trouble with in-laws	29
* Outstanding personal achievement	28
* Wife begins or stops work	26
Begin or end school	26
* Change in living conditions	25
* Revision of personal habits	24
Trouble with boss	23
* Change in work hours or conditions	20
* Change in residence	20
Change in schools	20
* Change in recreation	19
Change in church activities	19
* Change in social activities	18
Mortgage or loan less than $10,000	17
* Change in sleeping habits	16
Change in number of family get-togethers	15
* Change in eating habits	15
Vacation	13
Christmas	12
Minor violations of the law	11

*Event associated with pregnancy.

SOURCE: T. H. Holmes and R. H. Rahe, "The Social Readjustment Rating Scale," *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 11 (1967): 216. Pergamon Press, Ltd.

One way to anticipate the extent of stress is to examine an objective assessment, made by Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe,[20] of the amount of stress associated with various life events (see Table 2.1). They developed the Social Readjustment Scale, a list of stressful events weighted to indicate the demand each makes on an individual for adaptation.

Holmes and Rahe found that, of the people they interviewed, 80 percent of those whose total scores were above 300 suffered heart attacks, depression, or some other serious illness within a year. A list, from the Social Readjustment Scale, of changes associated with pregnancy and birth (see asterisked items in Table 2.1) totals 396—a score high enough to predict serious illness.

Parents who anticipate the changes they will be going through and who plan ways for coping with the changes can reduce stress during the pregnancy and after birth. Remember, too, that the same stresses recur at the birth of each child, at least while adjustments are being made. There will always be lost sleep, irregular hours, and the adaptation required to include a new family member.

Adjustment

The adjustment to becoming a parent will be easiest if parents learn as much as possible about caring for babies. Learning what newborns and infants can do and how they develop in the earliest days helps parents understand and interpret what babies experience and perceive. They can then be more sensitive and effective in their interactions.

Being willing to accept help and support eases the transition. Having both parents care for the child or including reliable friends or relatives reduces the burden on the mother and the father so they have some time to care for themselves. When parents set priorities, doing the most important tasks and letting the others go, they use energy in the most efficient and effective way.

We know little about how people cope with the learning and readjustment. Alice Rossi,[21] a sociologist, outlines four stages in the development of the role of parent, and compares this role with two other major social roles—the marital role and the work role. The four stages of a role cycle are (1) the anticipatory stage, (2) the honeymoon stage, (3) the plateau stage, and (4) the disengagement and termination stage.

During the anticipatory stage, the individual obtains training and becomes socialized to the role. For the marital role, the anticipatory stage is the engagement period. For the parental role, it is the months of pregnancy. For the work role, it is the learning, direct-training, and apprenticeship period.

The honeymoon stage begins as soon as the role is assumed—just after marriage, just after the baby is born, just after the work has begun. Rossi compares the marital role with the parental role. She points out that in the parental role, a great deal of learning and adjusting occurs in the honeymoon period, but in the marital role much of the adjusting is completed during the anticipatory stage. You marry someone you know and understand, and many problems can be worked out during the engagement.

The plateau stage is the long middle period in which the role is carried out. In marriage it is the years after the couple have adjusted to each other and have made a strong commitment to the marriage. In the parenting role it is the period of rearing the children. And in the work role, it is the years of continuous work.

The disengagement and termination stage occurs when a role ends. In the marital role, this occurs just before a divorce or at the time of a death. In the parenting role, some adults consider it occurs when the children are fully grown and married. However, as one psychologist remarked, "Parenthood is a life sentence." If you remain active and available to your children, they may see you as a parent until you die. In the work role, this stage occurs at retirement.

Rossi points out that traditionally men have worked outside the home and that women, until recently, have accepted motherhood as the primary role. With an accelerating rate of population growth, we are more accepting of women who do not want children and prefer to work, and we are more accepting of men who do not want to make a work role the dominant force in their lives.

Rossi points out that, until recently, there has been less conscious choice in taking on the parenting role than the marital or work roles. There are many more accidental pregnancies than there are accidental marriages or accidental careers. She examines marital relationships and points out that as long as a couple has no children and both husband and wife are working, there may be few adjustments for the couple to make. The patterns of interaction may be similar before and after marriage. In our present society the major changes in the couple's relationship come with the arrival of the first child. Thus, two major adjustments—readjustment to each other, and adjustment to the infant—are made at the same time, and this makes parenthood harder.

Rossi points out that social changes influence the nature of the parental role. In the past, a couple completed their education and became economically independent before marriage. Parenthood arrived after the work and marital roles were well established, and the individuals felt secure in these adult roles. As couples marry at younger ages and education continues for a longer time, marital and parental roles are assumed before economic and educational independence are achieved. Thus, young people are taking on the responsibilities of rearing children before they have achieved adult status, financially or in their occupational roles. This arrangement enhances equal status between husband and wife because the work responsibilities and home chores are shared between husband and wife. However, it is sometimes difficult for individuals who have not become completely independent to begin to rear children.

Rossi uses the concepts of instrumentality and expressiveness to deepen our understanding of the parenting roles of men and women. The concept of *instrumentality* refers to doing, producing, and accomplishing in an efficient way. The concept of *expressiveness* refers to nurturance, interpersonal relatedness, harmony between people, or expression of affect toward others. Professionals have looked at families and labeled the husband/father as the instrumental person because he has gone out and earned the paycheck, managed finances, developed ties with the rest of the community, and set long-term family goals. He has been a doer. The wife/mother has been considered the expressive person—the heart of the family—because she has been concerned with everyone's feelings and making sure family life runs smoothly and harmoniously. She has nurtured children and established many of the family's interpersonal ties.

Rossi asserts that each parent needs to be both instrumental and expressive. Fathers are instrumental in earning income for the family, and they often set long-term goals for the family. However, at home with their children, they are likely to be expressive. In the evenings and on weekends they spend a significant amount of time in leisure and recreational activities and in interpersonal contacts with family members. Although fathers may not spend much time in direct care of children, their children see them as expressive—as fun-loving, playful grown-ups interested in interpersonal relations. Children do not see their fathers at work, in instrumental roles.

Women may be expressive with husbands and, at times, with children. However, children may see mothers as instrumental because mothers are the ones who direct and control the activities most pertinent to the everyday lives of children. They set limits for children's behavior, enforce the limits, and give punishments. In raising children, women need to be assertive and independent, able to make quick decisions about the health and well-being of their children.

As parents, both men and women must be both assertive and accommodating, both instrumental and expressive. Adults who have not developed both aspects of their personalities find that, as parents, they need to do so.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have explored the importance of parenting for adults. We have examined Erikson's theory of development. Erikson emphasizes life-span growth, the importance of mutuality in relationships, and the development of positive strengths that incorporate active selection of goals, friends, and values with equal attention to acting in a determined, self-controlled, and persistent fashion to achieve one's ends. We have noted that the experience of becoming a parent is a major source of stimulation for further growth in adulthood. Individuals in a family are closely interconnected, and the family experience is related to the social and cultural milieu.

We have talked about the joys and stresses of becoming a parent and have reviewed ways that people go about making the decision to have a child. Learning about the care and development of children and seeking help from partners and trusted friends and relatives help to ease the transition to parenthood. Men and women can share the experience of parenthood and grow together when each spends significant time with the child.

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3

Strategies of parenting: Focusing on feelings

In the next two chapters we examine the basic assumptions and techniques of five strategies of parenting—in Chapter Three those that focus on feelings, and in Chapter Four those that focus on changing behavior. At the end of Chapter Four we compare the strategies and describe how each contributes to a problem-solving approach that fosters the child's development. In subsequent chapters we will discuss how each of these methods applies to developmental tasks and problems.

BARUCH'S STRATEGY

In the 1940's Dorothy Baruch wrote *New Ways in Discipline*,[1] in which she asserted that most misbehavior occurs because emotional needs of children are not met. Parents have to understand and accept the child's feelings and then direct and guide the expression of these feelings into approved behaviors.

When parents understand and accept children's feelings, they are better able to meet children's basic emotional needs for affection, belonging, recognition, and acceptance. As a result, children will have less fear, hurt, and resentment. Baruch believes most misbehavior is caused by children feeling hurt and angry and wanting to express these feelings, and that misbehavior will decrease as emotional needs are met.

Baruch urged that parents set necessary limits in an impersonal way—"It's time for lunch," or "Bedtime at eight in our house," are better than, "You have to come eat now," or "You must go to bed." The impersonal or objective quality of the rules reduces the child's feeling of being ordered or forced by a parent, and minimizes the child's resistance to the rules. In addition, rules are more likely to be obeyed and respected if children have a chance to express their annoyance or irritation at having to follow them. When parents accept the negative feelings, children do not have to express them in disruptive behavior.

Baruch advises parents to make available opportunities for self-expression—drawing, modeling clay, painting, cooking. Such activities serve as outlets to drain off energy and to provide children with additional sources of pleasure and feelings of competence. As a parent works to get closer to the child, parent and child need to spend time alone—not just when the parent is interested, but when the child suggests an activity. Sometimes a child wants a parent to join in a creative effort, an activity, or a physical exercise, and parents are advised to leap at such chances.

Baruch gives parents much sound counsel. They must observe how they react to their child's behavior. Are they upset and worried if the child expresses anger towards them, believing the child does not love them? Are they afraid to change their behavior, fearful that it is too late, and they'll never be able to change enough? Are they afraid to admit negative feelings, afraid those feelings will lead to more unacceptable behavior? Be yourself, Baruch advises parents. Respect what you do and be aware of your own emotions. Don't minimize negative feelings and let them build up—pent up emotions are likely to be expressed in indirect negative ways, or to burst out in an explosion that is more likely to be destructive than constructive.

Baruch sums up her approach saying that the best kind of discipline is the discipline that leads the child to grow as a separate individual who is concerned with the needs of other people as well as with his or her own needs. Baruch's emphasis on communication of feelings, her advice to distinguish between feelings and acts, her manner of setting limits in an impersonal way, and her recognition of the needs of parents—these provide the basic principles of several more recent strategies, including those of Ginott, Gordon, and Briggs. More than any of these other strategists, however, Baruch stresses the importance of activities and play as a means of channeling the strong feelings that children experience. Her work has influenced all the other strategies mentioned in this chapter and has stood the test of time very well.

GINOTT'S STRATEGY

Psychologist Haim G. Ginott expanded Baruch's views and in the 1960s wrote two best-selling parenting books—*Between Parent and Child*[2] and *Between Parent and Teenager.*[3] The application of Ginott's method in day-to-day life is chronicled in *Liberated Parents Liberated Children,*[4] by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, two mothers who participated in a discussion group with Ginott for over five years. These authors describe the ups and downs they experienced as parents as they tried to follow Ginott's advice. Their triumphs and problems bring to life the special strengths of Ginott's strategy.

Ginott says that the aim of parenting is to help children become unique individuals who feel responsibility for their own acts and compassionate concern for others. Parents usually think of responsibility in the narrow sense—responsibility for doing daily chores, practicing the piano, doing homework. Ginott thinks of responsibility in broader terms, as respect for life, ability to stand up for principles, empathy and compassion for the suffering of others, and willingness to take action when others are being hurt.

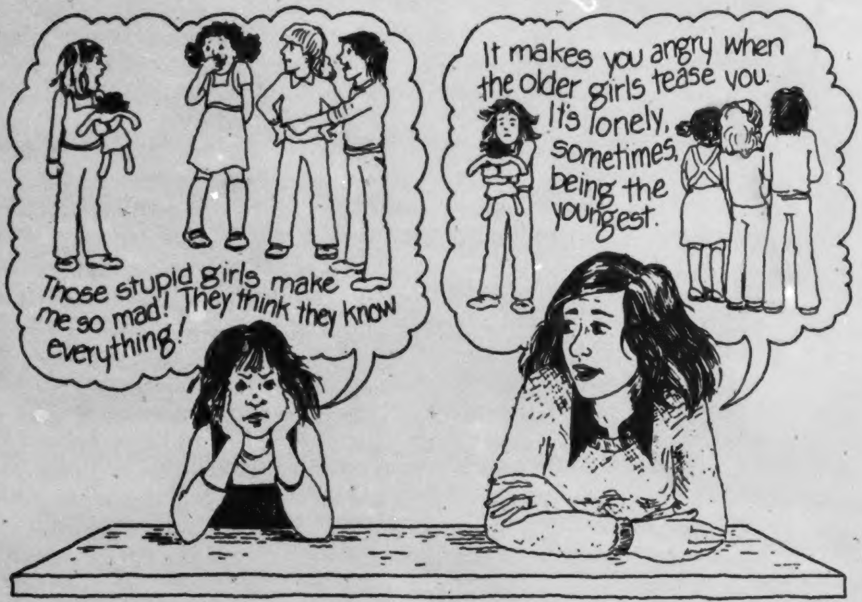
Ginott's basic principles of parenting advocate the use of: (1) communication of feeling between parent and child; (2) effective forms of praise and criticism; (3) establishment of limits of behavior, with choices and options within the limits; (4) enforcement of limits; and (5) parental modeling, especially of ways of handling feelings.

Communicating feelings

The heart of Ginott's strategy is communication of feelings between parent and child. Why are feelings so important? Many psychologists believe that an individual's feelings are all that give life meaning. If everyone felt exactly the same way about every other person, object, or event, life would lose its color, zest, and significance. Ginott describes emotions as follows:

> Emotions are part of our genetic heritage. Fish swim, birds fly, and people feel. Sometimes we are happy, sometimes we are not; but sometimes in our life we are sure to feel anger and fear, sadness and joy, greed and guilt, lust and scorn, delight and disgust. While we are not free to choose the emotions that arise in us, we are free to choose how and when to express them, provided we know what they are. That is the crux of the problem. Many people have been educated out of knowing what their feelings are. When they hated, they were told it was only dislike. When they were afraid, they were told there was nothing to be afraid of. When they felt pain, they were advised to be brave and smile. Many of our popular songs tell us "Pretend you are happy when you are not."
>
> What is suggested in place of this pretense? Truth. Emotional education can help children to know what they feel. It is more important for a child to know what he feels than why he feels it. When he knows clearly what his feelings are, he is less likely to feel "all mixed up" inside.
>
> How can we help a child to know his feelings? We can do so by serving as a mirror to his emotions. A child learns about his physical likeness by seeing his image in a mirror. He learns about his emotional likeness by hearing his feelings reflected by us.[5]

The parent's role is to describe or feed back—to reflect—the child's feelings, so the child is able to identify her reactions. Parents must not tell children they do not feel a particular way, or that they *should not* feel that way, or that others feel differently. When a parent feeds back the child's feelings, the child feels she is understood. When understood, she feels important and valuable as a person. As her responses receive attention, her self-esteem grows. How do you go about feeding back feelings? First you pay attention and listen to hear what the feelings are, and then you restate what you perceive in simple language.


Those stupid girls make me so mad! They think they know everything!
It makes you angry when the older girls tease you. It's lonely, sometimes, being the youngest.

Children are open and they reveal their feelings in everything they do and say—in gestures, tone of voice, posture, and the content of what they say. When parents pay attention, they find the clues to understanding the child's feelings.

What do you say to reflect the feelings? Ginott suggests a simple statement. If a child is angry, a parent might say, "Something happened to anger you today." Ginott suggests two rules to follow when describing or reflecting back the feelings: (1) get to the feelings underlying the specific event or complaint, and (2) move from a general statement to a specific one. For example, if a child complains that the mother never gets him the clothes he likes, the mother can feed back his feeling that he does not get what he wants. The child may go on and say, "Yeah, you don't care what I want, you pay more attention to Johnny (a brother)."

The mother then becomes more specific in her statement and says, "You feel I don't care about you. I only care about your brother." The mother can then give the child a quick hug or ruffle his hair as a sign of affection. She states the feelings, but she does not argue, apologize or explain. In many situations, this is all the child wants—recognition and acceptance of what is felt.

One of the mothers[6] in Ginott's groups raised the question of reflecting back feelings of great sadness over a loss. Is this wise? Does it help the child? Might not such feelings overwhelm him? Ginott responded that parents must learn that suffering can strengthen a child's character. When a child is sad in response to a real loss, a parent need only sympathize, "You are sad. I understand." The child learns that the parent is a person who understands and sympathizes.

Effective forms of praise and criticism

Ginott was the first strategist to describe wise ways to praise. He believes praise can help build confidence when it deals with the child's specific efforts and achievements rather than his personality. Phrases such as "You are a wonderful child" and "You are an angel" make children feel uncomfortable, because they know such statements are not accurate. If parents want to give praise that fosters growth, Ginott advises them to describe what they see and how they feel. The child is then free to draw conclusions about his or her abilities. For example, a parent might say to a ten-year-old, "I really liked the chocolate chip cookies you made for dessert. They tasted very good," or to a teenager, "Thank you for cooking dinner tonight. We all appreciated having a tasty, hot meal ready when we got home."

Just as praise should be specific and directed at the efforts and accomplishments of a child, criticism should be restricted to telling a child exactly what he or she has done that is unacceptable and how the behavior can be remedied. When the child makes a mistake, taking a calm, matter-of-fact attitude helps in two ways. First, children learn to make a distinction between annoying events, like spilling milk, and serious problems, like running into the street. If a parent reacts with equal intensity to both little and big upsets, children are likely to take everything seriously. Second, when criticism is followed by statements about what is acceptable, they learn that they are capable of making improvements in themselves. For example, if a child is slow in the morning, a parent can say, "If you want to be faster in the morning, you can lay out your clothes the night before, make your lunch and put it in the refrigerator, and decide what you want for breakfast."

This approach tells children they are more than their mistakes and failures in specific situations. If you point to definite ways children can improve their behavior, they are more likely to try. The child needs to hear specific remedies. Otherwise he thinks a mistake is a permanent part of his personality. For example, if a child occasionally stutters as he begins to talk, as many children do, parents may label him a stutterer. He may feel self-conscious about talking and develop a longer lasting problem than if parents say calmly, "Just slow down and take your time in speaking. We will wait to hear exactly what you have to say." Ginott suggests that when parents are being critical they should treat children as though they already have the desired traits and abilities and just need help developing them.

Effective forms of praise and criticism replace the less positive techniques of sarcasm, threats, bribes, and promises. Sarcasm hurts the child's self-image. Threats may seem desirable, because they tell the child what will happen, but Ginott believes they are harmful. A threat invites the child to repeat the misbehavior, just once more, to see if the threat is carried out. Thus, a threat is a challenge instead of a deterrent.

Bribes appear to be helpful because they reward the behavior the parent desires, but Ginott believes they are self-defeating. They suggest that the child cannot meet standards. The "if-then" approach ("If you practice the piano, then I'll take you to the movies") may help the child reach an immediate goal like practicing the piano, but it will not help develop the desired attitudes and work habits. The reward indicates that the parent thinks the child cannot do the task without a special inducement.

Promises also should be avoided, for similar reasons. When the parents make promises or extract them from children, they indicate a lack of trust in either themselves or the children. One's word alone—"We are going to go to the circus"—should be sufficient to convince the child. Trust should not require the added, "I promise."

When parents communicate feelings, use effective forms of praise and criticism, eliminate sarcasm, bribes, threats, and promises, they treat the child with respect and reduce the power struggle in the family. When children are respected, they are more likely to want to follow the rules of the house.

Establishing limits

While all feelings are accepted, some acts are forbidden. Ginott's basic belief is that feelings must be identified and accepted; actions have to be limited and channeled. Parents must set broad limits for the child's behavior, but within these limits, children are allowed to choose what they want. When a child has a voice in what happens to her and in making choices among alternatives, the child matures. Ginott gives many examples of the kinds of choices possible, even for very young children. A two-year-old can decide whether he wants toast or bread; a four-year-old can say whether she wants her eggs scrambled or boiled. On shopping trips, parents can select a variety of items that fit the family budget and permit children to choose from among these. Children can decide when to do homework or practice a musical instrument. They can choose their friends and playmates. The act of selecting among alternatives contributes to growth.

When limits are set and children are allowed to make choices, they need to know (1) what behavior is acceptable, (2) what behavior is unacceptable, and (3) what is acceptable as a substitute. Thus, a parent might say, "You cannot hit me, but you can hit the pillow." It is helpful to children if the limits are phrased in an impersonal way and are total, not partial— "Hitting your brother is not permitted," or "Playing in the street is dangerous and forbidden."

Ginott suggests four steps in stating limits: (1) accept the child's wish without criticism or argument, (2) state what the rule or limit is, (3) when possible, describe how the child can obtain her wish, and (4) accept any irritation or resentment the child feels over being denied a request. For example, with an elementary school child, a parent might say, "I understand that you want to watch an extra hour of TV tonight, but you know the rule is only one hour per day and you have already watched the one hour. If you want to give up tomorrow's hour, you can watch the extra hour tonight." If the wish is absolutely denied, a parent can say, "I know you are unhappy you can not watch TV tonight."

Ginott describes three zones of behavior. The green zone includes behavior that is desired and always approved; the red zone includes behavior that is always disapproved for health and safety reasons; the yellow zone includes behavior that is not approved but is sometimes tolerated in specific situations. Parents will be more tolerant when a child is under stress—for example, when a child is learning to do something new, has experienced a loss or is sick. For example, when a toddler is just learning to assert herself and to become independent, a parent will be more patient when she refuses to get dressed at the usual time or insists that mother let her play with her toys for a few minutes more.

When parents forbid particular activities for health reasons, they provide children with feelings of security. In setting limits, parents are protecting children from their own impulses. Children can become very frightened if they experience strong impulses but feel they have few controls. And so limits are reassuring.

Enforcing limits

If parents communicate feelings, show respect for the child, establish limits in an impersonal and clear way, then children usually conform to family rules. Thus, Ginott's rules for enforcing limits are not as specific as some parents might wish. The most definite rule is that under no conditions should either parent or child engage in physical attacks. If children are allowed to hit parents, the children may feel guilty and anxious, and the parents may feel resentful. Spanking, while done by many parents, is not approved because it teaches children to hit when angry. Ginott presents alternatives that require various degrees of activity by the parent.

First, when such consequences exist and are not physically harmful, parents can let the natural consequences of an act teach the child to change his behavior. This solution is often used in handling school problems, even with children in the first few grades of elementary school. The child takes the consequences school authorities impose for lateness, failure, or missing work. This is not an appropriate way of handling a child's playing with matches, running into the street or any act that results in physically harmful consequences.

Second, parents can sit down with children and explore possible solutions to problems. The parent serves mainly as a consultant or adviser. This technique is very useful with teen-agers who are increasingly independent and making important decisions about alcohol and drug use and about desired kinds of sexual activity.

Third, when reflecting feelings, setting limits, allowing natural consequences, and serving as consultants have not worked, parents can take action. Ginott does not believe in punishment, which he defines as a powerful person taking punitive action against a child. Taking action is different, because the parent uses some form of behavior to enforce an existing limitation. For example, let's assume that house rules include not bouncing a ball in the house. If a child continues to bounce the ball after being given the choice of going outside to bounce or staying in and not bouncing, then parents act. They either send the child outside with the ball or they take the ball away and permit the child to remain in the house. With teen-agers, parents might remove the privilege of using the car if children do not respect the family curfew. Again, removing the car privilege would not be punishment; it would be acting to enforce the established rule. The main difference is the parent's attitude. When a parent takes action, she is not a punishing authority figure, but an adult who is acting to enforce the meaning of her words.

Taking action indicates that the parent has given serious consideration to her own needs and feelings. As parents effectively handle their emotional reactions, they provide models for children of effective management of feelings. Probably the most difficult emotion for parents to handle is their own anger. Should parents freely express their angry feelings toward children? Yes, provided they do not attack the child's personality. Because anger is bound to arise in the course of rearing children, resolutions not to be angry are useless. But preparation for coping with anger can be valuable.

Ginott compares effective handling of anger with wise use of money. In controlling anger, parents want to be sure they get the best value for the expense of emotion. Anger should not be expressed in a manner that increases hostility. Rather, parents should express it in ways that bring them some relief from the tension and irritation and give children some insight into what is upsetting the parents. Parents must accept that at times they will be angry at their children and they need not feel guilty or ashamed. Parents can express their irritation and anger provided they do not attack the child with personal accusations that the child is a fool, incompetent, or a lazy idiot.

Parents can use a series of angry statements that range from mild annoyance and irritation to fury. A parent can start with, "I am annoyed." If the feelings become very intense, then the parent can use a stronger comment, "I feel very angry." If the anger continues, the parent can add statements saying what she would like to do "When I see the dishes left in the sink all day, I feel like throwing

them out the window." As children see that anger need not be destructive, but at times can be instructive, they learn behavior they can model.

Parents also must handle feelings of obligation toward children. Mothers, particularly, feel they have to make children happy. As a result, mothers sometimes find themselves doing errands, buying an expensive item of clothing or a special piece of sports equipment to please a child. However, when parents do these things, they are likely to develop simmering feelings of anger and hostility at "having to do so much for children." Ginott believes that parents should pay careful attention to all their feelings, and not do more than they really want to for children. He makes a distinction between the children's real needs for food, clothing, and shelter, which parents must meet, and children's wants. Parents must accept the fact that they cannot make children happy all the time. They must accept their own negative feelings when they are tempted to be overly generous. And they must find compromise solutions that meet the needs of both parents and children. If parents consistently try to do more for their children than they really want to do, the cost in lasting resentment will outweigh any benefit from these special efforts. Furthermore, children will be resentful, and rightly so, in return; they will feel that they never asked either parent to be a martyr, and that they are being wrongly blamed.

Ginott's strategy focusing on respect for the child, reflecting feelings, establishing limits, and enforcing them—helps parents create a family atmosphere that fosters the child's optimal growth and development.

GORDON'S STRATEGY

Like Ginott, Gordon[6] believes parenting is helping children to assume full responsibility for their physical and psychological well-being, so that they can become productive and cooperative citizens. His strategy rests on specific beliefs about children's abilities and about the importance of communication of feelings for healthy growth. Gordon clarifies some of the principles discussed by Ginott and gives definite steps and rules for putting them into practice. He goes beyond Ginott in presenting a specific way of solving parent–child problems and includes the child as an equal in finding solutions to conflict. We will look at Gordon's overall scheme and then take up the basic principles.

Gordon believes children are competent individuals, worthy of respect and consideration. Children need to feel accepted by parents, recognized as valuable individuals who can solve many problems. In an atmosphere of acceptance, children are surprisingly eager to do what parents want, provided parents have clearly communicated their wishes. Thus, two major principles of Gordon's method are (1) active listening, to draw out children's thoughts and feelings and to acknowledge that what they think and feel is important, and (2) sending I-messages that tell children the parents' reactions to what is going on. The interchange of feelings enables parents and children to understand each other better and to identify the basic problems in the family so they can be solved. The recognition of what the child is feeling is so important that, Gordon believes, many conflicts arise simply because children want parents' acceptance of their feelings. Often when children are given this acceptance, the conflict ends.

Parents must approach childrearing with the conviction that when conflicts arise, parents and children, working together, can find new solutions that will meet both the parents' needs and the children's needs. This method is termed the no-lose method because no one loses and each person's needs are met.

Gordon contrasts the no-lose method with the authoritarian methods in which parents use power to impose their wishes on children, and permissive methods in which children intimidate parents and impose their desires. The authoritarian and permissive methods leave some family members dissatisfied. Gordon insists that solutions can meet everyone's needs if family members work to achieve them. This may sound idealistic, but many parents who have used Gordon's strategies agree that the no-lose method is possible and rewarding.

The heart of Gordon's method is his belief that children are capable problem-solvers who can find solutions to what bothers them, even at very young ages. Moreover, children can contribute helpful suggestions to handle problems that affect all family members. Parents do not bear the entire burden for establishing family harmony but can look to children as active partners in family life. Gordon believes that usual childrearing methods of discipline and control prevent children from having a meaningful role. Parents who are uninformed about how children grow and develop are likely to believe either that they must exercise power and impose their wishes on children or the children will become tyrants who rule the parents. However, in the proper atmosphere, children bloom and amaze parents with their creative solutions. Even infants learn to solve their own problems, as we shall see in later chapters.

What is the proper atmosphere? Gordon believes children flourish when parents accept themselves as fallible human beings and are able to express their feelings. Parents must be sensitive to how they feel and react and must have confidence in both themselves and their children to communicate these feelings. Parents' emotional reactions to children can be categorized into acceptance of what the child is doing and nonacceptance. The degree of acceptance or nonacceptance felt by a particular parent in a particular situation depends on a variety of factors.

Parents differ in their tolerance of children's behavior. Some mothers and fathers accept a lot of noise, roughhousing, and messiness. Others accept very little. A parent's acceptance level will vary on the basis of the child's characteristics as well. Some children do very little that is unacceptable. We all know children who are adaptable, friendly, and easy to take anywhere. They smile, other people warm up to them, and all goes well most of the time. Other children are bombastic and busy, and at times everything they touch seems to crumble. They do many things that are unacceptable.

The acceptance level also will vary with the mood of the parent. On any given day, a mother or father may be very unaccepting of a particular noise level because they are tired and tense. On another day, the same parent may be rested or busy with a chore and quite willing to have a child pound a piano for a long time. Gordon terms this a "principle of inconsistency." When a parent accepts his own inconsistency, he can relax and feel less guilt and anxiety.

The mother and father may have different acceptance levels and are under no obligation to present a united front to children. One parent may feel comfortable with more disorganization than the other. Each parent must communicate his or her own feelings, to the other parent and to the children. The father cannot expect the mother to step in and present his point of view, and vice versa. He cannot expect his wife to intervene for misbehavior, like poor table manners, that do not bother her. And the mother cannot expect her husband to step in and express her concerns about dangerous activities. Each parent must be responsible for handling his or her own discontent in the family.

Gordon advises parents to be open and honest in what they are able to accept from their children. If parents try to be accepting of behavior that irritates and frustrates them, the underlying feeling will come through in nonverbal ways—a tight, tense tone of voice, a rigid posture. The child will sense that something is wrong, because the verbal and nonverbal messages do not agree, and anxiety and distrust will build up. The child may feel he or she has done something wrong, but the parent will not say what. As a result the child may distrust both the parent and his own perceptions of the situation. Both parents and children will feel better and have easier relationships if parents are clear about what they can accept.

Gordon believes also it is false to make a distinction between the child and the behavior. Parents are unwise to tell children they dislike the behavior, but love the child who does it. It is the total person who acts and if the parent disapproves of the behavior, the child who did it is not accepted. When the child feels accepted, the child feels loved. So one of the aims of parenting is to expand the area of acceptable behaviors. This results from changes in both parent and child.

Parents communicate acceptance to children in various ways. A parent can engage in passive listening, keeping silent and letting the child expand on her ideas and feelings without parental criticism or inquiry. Sometimes a simple question or statement—"Would you like to talk more about that?" or "I'm interested in your thinking" or "Sounds like you have some feelings about that" encourages a child to talk freely and comfortably.

Often a child will expand on a statement if parents do not rush in to give advice, criticize, threaten, or judge. As the child talks, he or she may be able to see the difficulty more objectively and to solve the problem without a parent saying a word.

Parents communicate acceptance by respecting children's independent efforts. When children start a project, such as drafting, playing, or even doing a chore like making a bed, parents often rush in and tell the child how the task can be done better. The child feels deflated, unappreciated, and often resentful that the parent belittles what he or she has done. Gordon illustrates the importance of a hands-off attitude from his own experience. His daughter was giving her first boy-girl party, and he wanted to make a lot of suggestions. He tried, but finally realized, from her response, that he was indirectly telling her she was incompetent.

We have been talking about promoting acceptance. However, most parents and children have difficulties that arise in both the acceptable and the unacceptable ranges of behavior, and different parent-child techniques are required for each kind of problem.

A child owns the problem when she is upset or unhappy for any reason, but the parent is satisfied with her behavior. Children may be upset for a variety of reasons, some having nothing to do with the parent. Perhaps a friend has ignored the child, or a teacher has made an unkind remark, or the child has lost a treasured possession. When the child is upset and owns the problem, the parent's role is to help her find her own solution. The parent does not solve the problem for the child, but creates an atmosphere in which the child can figure out what is really bothering her and what she can do about it.

Active listening

Active listening is the main tool for helping the child who owns the problem. When the parent listens and pays careful attention, the child has an opportunity to express her feelings and thoughts, and communicate her needs or the frustrations that are causing unhappiness. Active listening does more than help solve problems. Parents demonstrate their basic acceptance of the child as a separate, unique person with his own world view. When the child feels such acceptance, he feels loved. Feeling loved enables the child to grow and mature as an independent person.

Active listening is similar to feeding back or reflecting the child's feelings, as recommended by Ginott. The only difference between the two strategies is that Gordon suggests that the parent make his response similar to the child's statement. If a child says she feels too dumb to learn a school subject, the parent feeds back that she feels she is not smart enough. Ginott might feed back a response about the child's fear, worry, or frustration. Gordon gives examples of feeding back responses about deeper feelings, so the difference between the two is minimal. Following are Gordon's examples of active listening.[8]

CHILD: I don't want to go to Bobby's birthday party tomorrow.
PARENT: Sounds like you and Bobby have had a problem maybe.
CHILD: I hate him, that's what. He's not fair.
PARENT: You really hate him because you feel he's been unfair somehow.
CHILD: Yeah. He never plays what I want to play.

CHILD: (Crying) I fell down on the sidewalk and scraped my knee. Oh, it's bleeding a lot! Look at it!
PARENT: You're really scared seeing all that blood.

If the parent's response accurately reflects the child's feeling, the child confirms the feedback with a positive response. If the parent's interpretation is wrong, the child indicates that and has a chance to correct the misinterpretation by expanding on feelings. The parent can continue active listening and gain greater understanding of what is happening to the child.

A major advantage of active listening is that it helps children express feelings in a direct, effective way. As feelings are expressed and parents accept them, children learn they are like everyone else, and they need not fear what they feel.

In the process of being understood, children gain a feeling of being loved and cherished.

A second major advantage of active listening is that, as feelings are expressed, parents and children together learn that the obvious problem is not necessarily the real or basic problem. Like the rest of us, children use defenses and sometimes start by blaming a friend, a parent, or circumstances for what they are feeling. Sometimes they deny, at first, that they are upset. As parents focus on the feelings, children gradually come to identify the underlying problem and discover what they can do about it.

Gordon tells of a teen-ager who insisted she did not want any dinner. When her father used active listening to get at her feelings, she revealed she did not want to eat because her stomach was in knots. She was worried and frightened that her boy friend was going to leave her for another girl. She felt the other girl was more popular and successful with boys. She wanted to be that comfortable with boys but was afraid of making a fool of herself. After describing her feelings, she decided she would take a few chances and speak up. The father's active listening moved the conversation from a refusal to eat dinner to the daughter's statement of a serious problem and how she might handle it. As children feel understood, they feel increasingly competent and become responsible problem-solvers. A positive cycle is set up, in which parents are accepting of children and trust them to behave responsibly, and children become separate persons who act independently, thus reinforcing the parents' beliefs.

What qualities must parents have to do active listening? At first active listening involves more work and time than the characteristic responses of advice, criticism, or instruction. When a child says, "Oh, I'm furious at Margie!" it's easier to advise getting a new friend than to engage in a conversation about feelings. Gordon warns parents not to attempt active listening when they are hurried or when they are preoccupied. It takes time and effort to determine whether a joking comment covers up a wealth of sadness over some disappointment, whether a cutting, critical remark hides a feeling of hurt from rejection, or whether a casual remark about a success covers real pleasure at a difficult achievement. The parent needs to think carefully, to phrase and time his words with sensitivity, to make the comment that will move the dialogue along and facilitate expression of true feelings. Remember that if, too often, you start such a dialogue and the child begins to open up only to find that you cut him off, he will soon come to distrust these conversations and may refuse to participate.

Active listening requires persistence, patience and a strong commitment. When you begin to use active listening, conversations may seem unnatural, stilted, even contrived. But you will improve with practice—and you can use active listening with your mate and friends as well as with children. Old habits die hard, but you will find yourself giving fewer warnings, less advice and criticism, and being a better facilitator of communication as you continue to practice active listening.

Active listening is a helpful method, when it is appropriate. But there are times when it is not. If a child is asking for information, rather than expressing an emotion, your response should be to provide the information or guidance to the source of information. If a child does not want to talk about his feelings, you should respect the child's privacy, and not probe. Similarly, if you have been using active listening and the dialogue has gone as far as the child is willing to go, then you need to recognize that it is time to stop. And finally, don't begin an active listening conversation if you are too busy or too preoccupied to stay with it and really hear and respond to the child's feelings.

Be aware of both the child's words and the behavioral clues that accompany what he says. Is the child's attitude casual, or do you sense an emotional intensity that is inconsistent with the words? Is the child fidgety, uncomfortable, withdrawn, silent, or distracted and thinking about something else? Be aware, too, of your own feelings. Are you preoccupied with a problem at work, worried about getting dinner prepared before guests arrive, or are you concerned and empathetic and ready to spend whatever time is needed for an active listening dialogue? Don't diminish the value of this tool by dulling it with overuse or misuse.

I-messages

When a parent is angry, frustrated, irritated at a child, but the child is not bothered by the situation, the parent owns the problem. Many parents of teen-agers find themselves very angry at their sons or daughters because their rooms are often messy, dirty, and unpleasant to look at. If the teen-ager does not seem to mind living in such a room, the parent owns the problem. The parent must start the communication with a message expressing her needs and frustrations. The I-message, as this is called, contains three parts: (1) a clear statement of how the parent feels, (2) the child's behavior that has caused the parent to feel that way, and (3) why the behavior is upsetting to the parent. For example, a parent who is frustrated with a teen-ager's messy room might say, "I feel upset and frustrated when I look at your messy room, because the family works hard to make the house look clean and neat, and your room spoils all our efforts."

An I-message is a very effective means of communication, but one that is not, in the beginning, easy to use. You will find that you have to concentrate and practice to develop skill with I-messages. But when you are comfortable with them and they come easily, I-messages facilitate communication. I-messages help children to understand their parents as individuals. When a parent uses I-messages and feels free to express her individuality, she serves as a model that encourages children to react openly, too.

A parent may look at her feelings and at the child's behavior and discover that, after all, the behavior has no effect on her. When this happens, the reasonable parent may decide there is no need to ask the child to change the behavior. For example, many parents have been concerned about the length of their son's hair. But since this has no direct effect on them, many parents do not discuss their dislike of the long hair and do not ask the son to get a haircut.

Parents need to spend time analyzing their feelings and becoming more aware of exactly how they feel. Gordon points out that, often, when a parent communicates anger at a child, the parent may actually be feeling disappointment, fear, frustration, or hurt. When a child comes home an hour late, the parent may burst out in a tirade. The worry that grew into fear during the hour of waiting is *transformed into relief* that the child is safe, and that relief is then translated into angry words intended to prevent a recurrence of this disturbing behavior. Similarly, a parent may complain about a child's behavior when, in reality, what is disturbing the parent is a problem at work. The parent who has learned to use accurate I-messages is less likely, than one who has not, to misplace his anger and use a child or mate as a scapegoat.

What should you do if a child pays no attention to your I-messages? First, be sure you have the child's attention when you send the I-message. Don't try to communicate your feelings when the child is getting ready to rush out of the house or is already deeply immersed in some activity of his own. If your I-message is then ignored, send another, more forceful message. And be sure that the feeling tone matches your feelings.

I-messages have several benefits. First, when parents use I-messages, they begin to take their own needs seriously. This process benefits all family relationships because parents feel freer—more themselves—in all areas of life. Second, the child learns about the parents' reaction, which they may not have understood until the I-message. Third, the child has an opportunity to engage in problem-solving in response to I-messages. Even very young toddlers and preschoolers have ideas, not only for themselves but for others. Siblings often have good ideas about what may be bothering another child in the family. They think of things that might escape parents.

Sometimes a child responds to an I-message with an I-message. For example, when a parent describes upset and distress because the lawn is not mowed, the daughter may reply that she feels annoyed because mowing interferes with her after-school activities. At that point, the parent must "shift gears," as Gordon terms it, and reflect back the child's frustration by using active listening.

Appreciative I-messages Gordon's techniques can be used for family interactions that do not involve conflict. He suggests that parents send appreciative I-messages. These statements consist of three parts: how the parent feels, what the child did to make the parent feel that way, and the specific effect of the behavior on the parent. For example, "When you let me know where you are, I feel relieved, because I don't have to worry about you." Appreciative I-messages can improve the quality of family life. One mother commented that she never realized how much time she spent sending I-messages of irritation, in contrast to appreciative I-messages, until one evening when her son reported that he had cleaned up a huge mess made by the dog. Often when the dog had an accident, it went unattended until the mother came home from work. She would complain about how upset she was and how it delayed her getting dinner. She later realized that, in contrast to the long period spent expressing irritation, she spent only a few seconds saying "Thank you" and expressing her appreciation. As a result she resolved in the future to be more attentive to helpful behaviors and more verbal in expressing her thanks.

Preventive I-messages Preventive I-messages are useful in heading off problems and in helping children to see that parents are fallible, too. These messages express parents' future wants or needs and give children an opportunity to respond positively. For example, if you say "I got very little sleep last night and want quiet so I can take a nap," you make it possible for them to help you. Preventive messages can be especially practical before an unusual event that may place a special strain on family members. One mother reported that within an hour after the family started out on a long driving trip, the two children, ten and thirteen, began bickering in the back seat. She stopped the car and explained they would be driving for several days, and she needed cooperation. She realized that it would be hard to be cooped up in the car, but it would be easier for everyone if they did not fight. Miraculously, she said, in five days, there was hardly a single fight, and the whole family had a good time.

Since conflicts can continue even when feelings are clearly and fully expressed, Gordon outlines three methods for handling the problems. Parents can modify the environment so that the problem is removed, they can engage in mutual problem-solving using the no-lose method, or they can change their attitudes so that they no longer view the behavior as a problem.

Modifying the environment

Often when parents change the home environment, they find that some problems are eliminated and the child's behavior changes. There are many ways of changing the environment for young children. You can safety-proof it; you can simplify it by removing breakable objects, providing storage space for toys, and installing child-height hooks for clothes; and you can enrich the environment with toys and materials for creative pursuits. You can help older children to organize their environments by providing ample shelf and drawer space and by furnishing their rooms attractively so that children are motivated to be neat. These modifications reduce the number of causes for conflicts and make the home environment a more congenial place for the child.

Some parents balk at rearranging their homes and life styles to accommodate their children. Gordon asks, if an aging parent were coming to live in the house, would parents make changes in their home. Almost all answer with a decisive, "Of course." He quickly asks why young children deserve less consideration than elderly parents when, in fact, they are less capable of adaptation than the aging parent.

No-lose method

After all the environmental modifications have been made, parents can use the no-lose method of solving problems. Gordon outlines six steps in the no-lose method: (1) defining the problem, (2) generating possible solutions, (3) evaluating possible solutions, (4) deciding on the best solution, (5) implementing the decision, and (6) follow-up evaluation.

Parents begin by explaining to children the exact problem that is troubling them and its effect on them, and then say that they are going to try a new method to solve the problem so that everyone's needs are met. Children may be skeptical at first, thinking this may be another way for their parents to get them to behave. But as children realize that their needs are being considered, they become more active participants. Gordon advises parents and children to spend the most time on defining the nature of the problem and exchanging possible solutions.

Parents and children may disagree about a problem. Parents may feel upset by the continual mess in the kitchen on weekend mornings as children trail in one after another and get breakfast at odd times without cleaning up. The mother finds her kitchen in a mess and no one child to hold responsible. The children, in turn, may feel the problem is that Mom won't serve weekend breakfasts at a reasonable time, like 10 or 11 A.M., because she wants to be out doing errands. Active listening by everyone and willingness to hear suggestions can bring agreement.

Gordon advises that, when you start these problem-solving sessions, they should be frequent. But don't let a discussion last too long. If the list of problems is long, take the most important ones first. If a problem involves only two family members, the others don't need to participate. And remember that it is not necessary to resolve a problem the first time it is discussed. Family members should feel free to think about a problem and then discuss it together and resolve it next time.

As you talk about each proposed solution, try to figure out how it will work. Once a solution is selected, consider how the results will be evaluated, and make sure that you allow enough time so that it has a chance to succeed. During the process of proposing solutions and picking one, each family member needs to listen actively to the suggestions of all family members. In this situation, as in so many, family members need to be able to trust each other and to recognize each other's needs.

Sometimes children are reluctant to get involved in mutual problem-solving. Gordon suggests that parents start with a problem that family members are not upset about. For example, in your first problem-solving session you could talk about how the family is going to spend the next vacation. Also, you can help the individual child to understand that the no-lose method is worthy of his participation if you start with a problem that is bothering him. If a child can see, concretely, how his life is better when these talks are held, he is more likely to participate.

Once a solution is agreed on, parents may find that children don't follow through. Children break agreements for a variety of reasons—they may not have had enough experience in self-direction, they may forget, they may test the limits to see what will happen, or they may have accepted an unworkable solution just to end the session. When an agreement is broken, parents must send a strong I-message of disappointment and surprise, as soon as possible. Perhaps the child can be helped to keep the agreement. Or perhaps another problem-solving session is needed.

Parents might be tempted to build punishments into the problem-solving agreement—"If you don't carry out garbage, your allowance is reduced by 25¢." Gordon advises against the use of penalties to enforce agreements. Parents should assume children will cooperate, instead of starting with a negative expectation expressed in the threat of punishment. Children frequently respond to trust.

Parents change themselves

Parents may find they have modified the environment, engaged in mutual problem-solving, and still some problems remain. Parents then need to consider whether they must change their behaviors or attitudes. When conflicts result from clashes of values or from parents' concern about a child's behavior that has no direct effect on them, Gordon advises parents to withdraw from the conflict. Parents may retain their values, they even may continue to worry about their child's behavior. But instead of participating in conflict with the child, they need to change their responses to the behavior.

Such situations are most likely to occur with older children who are becoming more independent. As children are exposed to the ideas of friends, teachers, and even television, they begin to adopt their own values. No matter how conscientious parents have been in modeling the values they want to pass along, children are likely to reject some of those values and to adopt others—and those may include some that parents cannot understand or accept. When this happens—and it is almost inevitable, because the world in which our children are forming is very different from the world in which we grew up—Gordon recommends that parents should not try to impose their beliefs. Instead, he recommends that parents respect the values of the child and the child's right to make his own choices.

Modeling and consulting

Does this mean that parents have no influence over their children? No. Parents are models for their children. From the earliest days of a child's life, parents model a basic attitude toward life, an optimistic reaching out to others, an interest in the world and all that occurs in it. Parents model basic patterns of interaction with other people, showing respect for others, being accepting of them and sensitive to their needs and feelings. As we shall see in Chapter Six, even year-old babies observe and copy such behavior. Parents model values of honesty, achievement, and concern for the world they live in.

When parents serve as models, their influence is indirect. They demonstrate in their day-to-day lives what they believe to be important, and their behavior guides their children. However, there is an additional indirect way in which parents influence children, beginning in the toddler years. They serve as consultants to children, providing information and guidance as children require these. Toddlers look to parents to provide strategies for achieving their ends—how to put blocks together to make a fort, how to dress a doll. They want parents to show them how, not do it for them. As children become teen-agers, parents serve as consultants—pointing out job skills the child may have, providing information about the risks of smoking cigarettes and the dangers of drinking while driving. Parents cannot dictate a teen-ager's behavior, but they can inform him about the facts as they interpret them. Just as a business consultant is calm and persuasive, so parents must remain detached and objective as they provide information in conflictful areas.

In the early years, children require more definite limits in day-to-day life routines, and parents provide limits, using I-messages and the no-lose method. In the teen years, children take more responsibility for setting their own limits, and parents will find that modeling and being a consultant are the main forms of influence.

There will come a moment, in the life of each of your children, when you will realize that your time is up—that the process of inculcating values by example is over. Each parent has, with each child, just so much time, just so many years and months and days, in which to influence the child by example and instruction. And then, suddenly, the day comes when you realize that this child has reached an independence that, while it may not be total, has put him beyond your influence as a parent. That moment will, in some cases after a period of separation and rebellion, be followed by years of friendship. You and the child will be able, gradually, to exchange ideas and feelings, no longer hampered by the constraints of the parent/child relationship but instead interacting as adults.

Gordon's method is straightforward and clear. But use of parent effectiveness training requires practice, reflection, and judgment. Gradually you will learn when active listening, I-messages, the no-lose method, modifying the environment, or changing your behavior will be most helpful.

BRIGGS' STRATEGY

Dorothy Briggs[9] focuses on how parents can help their children develop self-esteem—the quality she believes is the basis of psychological health. Baruch, Ginott, and Gordon agree that self-esteem is a critical attribute for children. However, they emphasize the quality of the parent-child interaction, which they believe determines the child's self-esteem. Briggs' approach has special value because she includes factual information on the growth of the child's self-concept, the kinds of experiences that promote such growth, and the kinds of experiences that promote optimal growth of intelligence and creativity. While she includes discussions of the problem behaviors, she goes beyond this to consider the specific techniques for promoting effective functioning in all areas.

Evaluations and expectations

Parents' positive evaluations of a child are the first and major source of the child's self-esteem. Parents communicate their feelings about the child from the time of birth, by the way they hold, caress, and care for the child. From these earliest interactions, the child builds a feeling of self-worth. When parents feel that the child is a lovable, capable, worthwhile individual and communicate that, the child behaves in this fashion and finds confirmation of this positive image in day-to-day activities. As the child reaches out and explores the world and engages in creative activites, she finds that she is competent, and her positive self-image is reinforced. Parents' emotional reactions to the child set up what L. Eugene Arnold has termed "a virtuous cycle."[10]

As children grow, they measure themselves against the yardstick of parental expectations. When there is a discrepancy between expectations and the children's behavior, children question their adequacy rather than the parents' standards. Thus, parents have a tremendous responsibility to form realistic expectations for their children. If the expectations are too high and children cannot measure up, they feel like failures. If the expectations are too low, children feel incompetent, thinking they can do no better than parents expect. As parents we would like to think that our expectations are based on the qualities of the individual child and the demands of the social setting, but many other personal factors influence us. The expectations our parents had for us, our cultural values, our life experiences and personal needs as adults combine with our knowledge of a particular child to form our expectations. Knowledge of how children grow and develop—what psychological tasks they are struggling with at each age period—can provide an important influence on our expectations.

Briggs presents an Expectation Inventory that parents can use to weed out unrealistic and unnecessary expectations. Is it really necessary for your child to wear that extra sweater or is it that you like to be warmly dressed? When you complain that your child does not eat enough, is this really a problem? Is he underweight and often sick, or does he seem to need less food to maintain his weight and still be active? Are you demanding that your children develop interests that you would like to have, or are they free to develop their own abilities and talents? Parents must be careful that their own personal needs and ungratified desires do not dictate what they expect from children.

What kind of psychological climate must a child have to develop a positive self-image? Many parents assume that if they express their love by physical affection, self-sacrifice, overprotection, high expectations, material gifts, and a lot of time with children, they have done a good job as parents. However, Briggs describes the basic ingredients for developing a child's self-esteem as genuine encounters with parents in an atmosphere of psychological safety. In a genuine encounter, a parent gives a child focused attention, or "attention with a special intensity born of direct, personal involvement. Vital contact means being intimately open to the unique qualities of your child."[11] By being involved, Briggs means watching what the child does and says without letting your attention wander. Parents can give this kind of attention when they are fulfilled individuals who are actively involved in life.

Atmosphere of psychological safety

Briggs describes an atmosphere of psychological safety that has six important components. The first is trust. Children must be able to rely on parents to meet their needs and to be open and honest with them. Parents must strive to communicate what they really mean. Parents will want to keep some of their thoughts and feelings to themselves, but they must be honest about that, too. Parents must avoid saying things they do not mean—for example, "Nothing is bothering me," when they are worried about work. Parents think they are sparing children either criti-

cism or worry, but children are far more bothered by the discrepancy between what the parent says and the emotional state communicated by the parent's voice and behavior.

The second component is nonjudgment. Parents must convey their feelings to children in a nonblaming way. To do this, Briggs suggests parents become reactors rather than judges. In Gordon's terms, Briggs suggests sending I-messages. Instead of saying, "You're terrible," say, "I can't stand all the arguing we do." Instead of saying, "You're lazy," be specific—"I worry that the dog is not fed when you say you are going to feed her." Briggs separates the behavior from the person, so that it is possible to love the child and approve of him without approving his behavior.

The third component is cherishing children, caring about them just because they are who they are, appreciating their special qualities. Parents cherish children when they respect them as individuals, when they focus on the child's assets rather than on shortcomings. Perhaps your daughter likes to wear unusual costumes to nursery school. When you appreciate that she likes to go to school as a ballerina, even though you wish she would go in a play outfit that permits climbing without bruises, you are cherishing your child. If a child develops a sense that she is worthwhile, then she will have greater freedom to explore and engage in activities. She will not worry about making mistakes or being criticized, because she has a strong self-image. This freedom will enable her to develop greater competence.

The fourth ingredient of the safe atmosphere is letting children own their own feelings. Briggs advises accepting all feelings but not approving all acts. Parents must realize that their perceptions of a situation are not the only valid reactions. Each person experiences a slightly different aspect of a situation. For example, one mother complained that her twelve-year-old daughter was sassy to her and screamed at her. The daughter felt the mother had been making fun of her, and she screamed in response to the hurt she felt. Both reactions were valid, although they certainly were different.

The fifth component is empathy—understanding and feeling what the other person experiences. The empathetic parent is genuinely interested in what the child feels and reflects this back. Empathy is built on the belief that each person owns his or her own reactions. Thus, parents can be comfortable in reflecting back something that is quite different from what they think and feel.

> Jim played a tennis match with an older, more experienced player and bemoaned his loss in an irritated voice because he felt he should have won. His mother, who works hard for everything she has achieved, was annoyed that her son expects to do well with little practice, but nevertheless, bit her lip, and reflected that he felt he should have been able to beat the older player. To her amazement, her son said, well, he only wished he had been able to play as well as he did when rallying. If he had, then he would have beaten the other player. This seemed more realistic to the mother, who was delighted that focusing on her son's feelings had given her a new view of the situation.

The sixth component is parents' faith in the child's capacity for growth. Just as we believe a plant can grow, so we must trust our children to have within them the capacity for full development. But we do not wait, passively, for changes to occur. We seek ways of stimulating and encouraging development, just as a gardener fertilizes a plant. We also accept that, at times, growth may be halted or sidetracked because of unusual events. Change can be a scary experience for children. There will always be a pull toward the new and unknown, but there will also be hesitation and reluctance to give up what is familiar and trusted. Parents must be quietly supportive at such times, and understanding of the child's reluctance to explore a new path. Also, we must recognize that children have different growth patterns, so there may be times when our children will be out of step with their peers and especially in need of parents' support.

The environment of psychological safety leads the child to feel high self-esteem based on a sense of importance and value to those she loves. With high self-esteem, the child is able to explore the world with confidence and to relate to others as a unique individual worthy of respect.

When problems arise, Briggs suggests strategies similar to those of Gordon. She advises active listening so children can express and understand their feelings, sending I-reactions, and mutual problem-solving. Like Gordon, she believes that anger is a disguise for many other emotions and that its meaning must be decoded.

Two of Brigg's most important contributions are (1) relating parenting techniques to children's growth in self-concept at different ages, and (2) pointing out parental behaviors that facilitate development in childhood and adulthood.

SUMMARY

The strategies of Baruch, Ginott, Gordon, and Briggs focus on communicating feelings, particularly parents' feelings of acceptance and recognition of the child as a unique individual with potential talents and abilities. The emotional bond between parent and child is considered the touchstone for optimal growth and development. Ginott, Gordon, and Briggs all emphasize strengthening this bond by showing respect for the child and sensitivity to the child's needs. They advocate that parents reduce power struggles by eliminating criticism, blame, and judgment of children. Parents who do so create an atmosphere in which children learn to solve their own problems and to function independently.

All these strategies suggest that parents pay attention to their own thoughts and feelings as well as those of their children. To become effective, parents must know when they are worried, discouraged, sad, pleased, and satisfied, and they must seek out the aspects of their children's behaviors that trigger these reactions. Just as parents accept children's feelings in an understanding way, they must accept their own emotional reactions without criticism or self-blame.

These strategies differ somewhat in handling parental anger. Ginott believes parents have a right to become angry without feeling anxiety or guilt about their anger. At times, a healthy expression of anger is not only acceptable but useful. Anger tells the child that parents are concerned about what happens to him. However, parents must be careful not to attack the child personally. Gordon and Briggs believe that anger is a secondary response that covers an initial reaction of fear, frustration or dissatisfaction. They urge that the primary response be expressed, rather than the anger.

Strategists differ in how they establish limits. Ginott is direct in establishing limits in an impersonal way, and in taking firm action to enforce the limits. Gordon and Briggs are more likely to encourage children to problem-solve and devise their own solutions to conflicts, although Gordon and Briggs also act to guarantee the safety of the child.

ADDITIONAL READING

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Notes

1 Dorothy W. Baruch, *New Ways in Discipline* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1949).
2 Haim G. Ginott, *Between Parent and Child* (New York: Avon, 1969).
3 Haim G. Ginott, *Between Parent and Teenager* (New York: Avon, 1971).
4 Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, *Liberated Parents Liberated Children* (New York: Avon, 1975).
5 Ginott, *Between Parent and Child*, pp. 39–40.
6 Faber and Mazlish, *Liberated Parents Liberated Children*.

7 Thomas Gordon, *P.E.T. Parent Effectiveness Training* (New York: New American Library, 1975). Thomas Gordon with Judith G. Sands, *P.E.T. in Action* (New York: Bantam, 1978).

8 Gordon with Sands, *P.E.T. in Action*, p. 47.

9 Dorothy C. Briggs, *Your Child's Self-Esteem* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970). Reprinted by permission of Doubleday & Company, Inc.

10 L. Eugene Arnold, "Helping Parents Beat the System," in *Helping Parents Help Their Children*, ed. L. Eugene Arnold (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1978), pp. 55–64.

11 Briggs, *Your Child's Self-Esteem*, p. 64.

4

Strategies of parenting: Focusing on behavior

In this chapter we look at the strategies of Dreikurs and the behaviorists. Both focus on the child's behavior, but each advocates a different role for the parent. Dreikurs believes in a democratic atmosphere in which parents are guides. The behaviorists give parents a more active and directive role.

DREIKURS' STRATEGY

Dreikurs and his collaborators[1] present a method that is based on the work of Alfred Adler.[2] A Viennese psychiatrist and an early follower of Sigmund Freud, Adler was the first analyst to break with Freud. He continued psychiatric work, pursuing an interest in the healthy and positive aspects of human behavior. He believed that humans are purposive, decision-making beings, born with an innate capacity for cooperation, a strong desire to be part of the larger social group, and a genuine interest in and concern for other people. This inborn capacity for finding fulfillment in social living must be developed in day-to-day life experiences. To promote optimal social development, Adler described methods of rearing children and effective principles of education that would promote optimal social development.

Instead of examining a person's past, Adler inquired about the future—where the individual is heading. The ultimate goal is full development of the self. Abraham Maslow later used the term self-actualization to describe the process of self-development. The specific form of actualization depends on the individual's particular talents. The center of personality, for Adler, is the creative self, an active force that selects a life goal in terms of the person's capabilities and experiences and finds the means to achieve the goal. The self also organizes a unique life style that unifies the personality. Adler was one of the first to pay careful attention to individual differences among people and to focus on the unique adaptations to life that each person makes.

Dreikurs centers his strategy on Adler's ideas and shows how they are useful in adapting to today's world. A democratic society requires childrearing techniques that will prepare individuals to live in a free society as equals with other individuals. Freedom is not absence of rules. It is order imposed by the agreement of everyone concerned. Parents influence children by gaining their cooperation so that they work together for family as well as for individual goals. Instead of rewards, parents use encouragement to stimulate the development of the child's inner resources. They offer guidance and counsel when appropriate. Instead of punishment, they rely on the natural and logical consequences of a child's behavior to provide information on the practicality of an act. Dreikurs believes children will not do what they know is harmful to them. Once they have learned that an act brings trouble and discomfort, they will avoid it. Dreikurs also advises democratically organized family councils, so that all family members have an equal voice in the solution of problems. Key concepts for Dreikurs are cooperation, respect, encouragement, goals, logical and natural consequences, and democratic living.

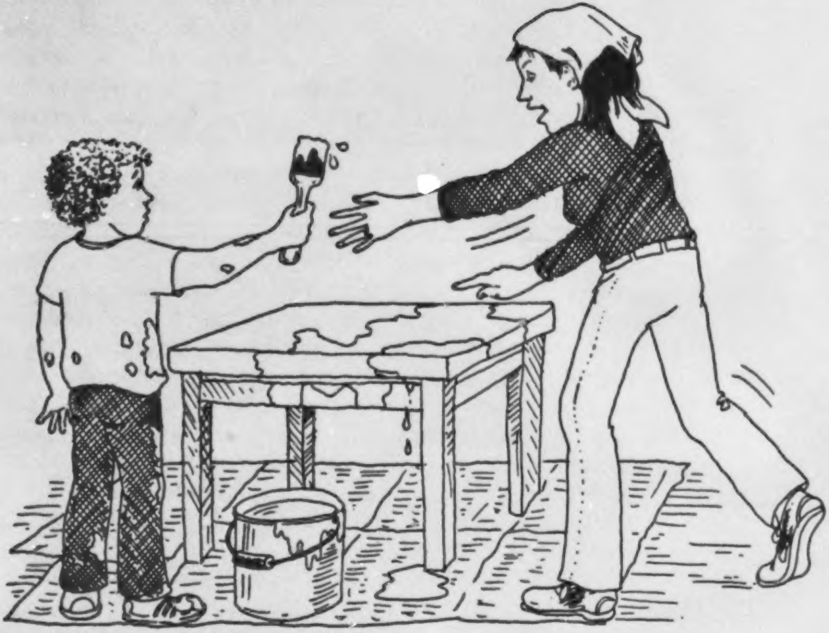
Dreikurs believes these methods are more effective than traditional techniques, which require that parents act as powerful authorities to impose external controls of rewards and punishments on children who must conform. Such strategies produce children who are comfortable in authoritarian societies that stress superior-inferior relationships, but they do not help children to live in a democratic society.

The child's basic competence

Dreikurs believes that children have built-in capacities to develop in healthy, effective ways. They have a push to be active and competent, and a parent's main task is to provide an environment that permits this development to occur. The child's strongest desire is to belong to a group, and from infancy the child seeks acceptance and importance within the family. The deepest fear of childhood is fear of rejection. Each child develops a unique path to family acceptance. The child does this by using innate abilities and environmental forces, and shaping these into dynamic relationships with other family members.

Do parents usually help children discover their own strengths and abilities? No, says Dreikurs. Most often we tear down their confidence with such comments as "What a mess you make," or "I can do it for you faster," or "You are too little to set the table." Dreikurs recommends that parents use encouragement to help children develop their abilities. He defines encouragement as a "continuous process aimed at giving the child a sense of self-respect and a sense of accomplishment."[3] Encouragement is expressed by word and deed.

A parent's facial expression, tone of voice, gesture, and posture all tell chil-



dren how the parent feels about them. In many different ways—warm cuddling, active play, gentle nurturing—a parent can communicate that children are worthwhile and capable of participating in social living. How does a parent provide encouragement for development? First, she respects the child and, from infancy, permits self-sufficiency in all possible situations. Babies, for example, are encouraged to entertain themselves; they are left alone at times to explore their fingers and toes, play with toys, and examine their surroundings. As soon as possible, they feed themselves. Very young children of one or two are included in family chores and responsibilities as soon as they show any interest in helping. Even a toddler can empty a waste basket and carry small nonbreakable items to the dinner table. Second, parents give verbal encouragement, telling children specifically what they do well. "I like your painting with all the bright colors," "You certainly picked up all your toys quickly and that helps Daddy when he vacuums." Encouraging comments often refer to the completed task. But children soon learn that enjoyment comes from the process as well as from the final success.

Democratic family living

Democratic family living provides an encouraging atmosphere in which the needs of children and parents are given equal respect and consideration. However, everyone also has responsibilities. Parents provide food, shelter, clothes, and recreation for children. Children, in turn, must contribute to family functioning by doing chores and errands. Material rewards are not given for doing a particular number of chores. When mutual respect among equal individuals is the rule in a family, members work together to do the jobs that are necessary for the welfare of all. To deny children the opportunity to do their share is to deny them an essential satisfaction in life. Democractic living insures freedom for family members but does not imply an absence of rules. Dreikurs strongly favors structure in family life, and believes it provides boundaries that give a child a feeling of security.

In order to help children follow routines, parents serve as models. They also teach children how to do routine tasks. Parents often expect that children will be able to master self-care and household chores without any instruction, and they do not spend the time needed to teach children. How many parents have taught a child, step by step, how to make a bed or how to get dressed, then observed as the child increased in skill, giving added coaching as needed? An encouraging parent helps children to be both self-sufficient and involved with other people. Dreikurs describes the difficulties of life and insists that we prepare our children to cope with them. Life presents problems and hazards. Children who meet painful situations will learn to conquer them if their parents are not overprotective.

Even in ideal family conditions, children make mistakes and fail to accomplish what they set out to. Parents must learn to accept mistakes without dwelling on them. Dreikurs describes parents' tendencies to overemphasize the errors children make. We want so much for children to grow up and do well that sometimes we trot at their heels, pointing out every minor mistake and telling them what they must do to improve. Under such a regime children may get the idea that they have to be perfect in order to be accepted. Far from stimulating them to action, that idea may build so much fear that the child cannot function. Dreikurs writes,

> We all make mistakes. Very few are disastrous. Many times we won't even know that a given action is a mistake until after it is done and we see the results! Sometimes we even have to make the mistake in order to find out that it is a mistake. *We must have the courage to be imperfect*—and to allow our children also to be imperfect. Only in this way can we function, progress, and grow. Our children will maintain their courage and learn more readily if we minimize the mistakes and direct their attention toward the positive. "What is to be done now that the mistake is made" leads to progress forward and stimulates courage. Making a mistake is not nearly as important as what we do about it afterward.[4]

Parents need to separate the deed from the doer when responding to mistakes. It is important to make it clear that the child is not a failure, but unskilled, in need of teaching. In coping with a mistake, parents need to stay problem-oriented—to look at the situation, see what needs to be done, and try to help the child function well by giving encouragement and guidance. When a junior high school student gets a poor grade in school, the parent can sit down with the child and help to figure out what the trouble is and how the child might improve. Perhaps more studying, or more careful attention to deadlines for papers, or greater participation in class will result in better grades. Parents can help guide the child to select the actions that will bring improvements.

Mistakes are a natural part of life and need not have lasting effects. Even so, children can become discouraged for various reasons. Parents or other authority figures may be so critical that children have low self-esteem and withdraw, rather than risk being rejected or making mistakes. Children may trigger their own discouragement by comparing what they do with what older brothers or sisters or parents can do. In such comparisons they always come out poorly and conclude they are failures.

Misbehavior—mistaken goals

When children feel discouraged and are unable to become involved in activities and make positive contributions to the social group, they are likely to seek other ways to feel important and competent. Misbehavior results from the pursuit of goals that give feelings of importance as substitutes for feelings of self-sufficiency and social integration. Dreikurs identifies four goals of behavior and calls them "mistaken" goals because they do not bring genuine feelings of competence and participation. These goals are attention, power, revenge, and inadequacy. The parent's task is (1) to understand which of the four mistaken goals is motivating the child's behavior, and (2) to act so that the purpose is no longer achieved. Thus, the parent must understand the child's underlying feelings, but instead of reflecting back feelings, Dreikurs advises action to modify the child's behavior.

A child is seeking mistaken goals when the behavior conflicts with the needs of the situation. For example, a child may seek attention by being talkative and charming. This behavior is pleasant and endearing rather than annoying. However, when such behavior prevents others from talking, it becomes misbehavior. A child may ask his mother to play a game with him—a reasonable request. But when he insists on this attention when the mother is preparing dinner, she can assume he wants attention rather than to play a game. Where there are several children in a family, they may band together and seek attention by bickering.

When attention is denied, a child may hunt for an issue to use in the struggle for power. A three-year-old may insist she does not have to go to bed at 7:30 P.M. If she persists, running around the house and causing the mother to spend a lot of time in the chase, the child is struggling for power. Sometimes parents find it hard to tell whether a child is seeking attention or power. Dreikurs points out that the child usually stops the mistaken behavior after the first request if he is seeking attention, but not if what he wants is power. Attempts to stop the behavior only aggravate the child, who will try all the harder for power.

When problems continue, the child may intensify the power struggle and seek revenge and retaliation. The child has lost hope of getting approval through positive behavior and feels there is nothing to lose, so revenge is sought as a means of feeling important. The child is determined to feel important even if he has to hurt others physically.

Dreikurs remarks that this kind of misbehavior is particularly sad because the child who needs encouragement the most is the one most likely to be punished. Parents need to offer warm understanding and sympathetic acceptance so the child can release his own positive qualities. Unfortunately, punishment intensifies anger and guilt, leads to further attempts to provoke the parents, and sets up a vicious cycle.

The child who claims inadequacy to explain poor performance in some activity is also pursuing a mistaken goal. Dreikurs gives the example of an eight-year-old boy who was having school difficulties. The teacher told the mother he was a poor reader, was slow in all subjects, and showed no improvement despite the teacher's extra efforts. She asked the mother what he did at home. The mother replied that he did not like chores and did them so poorly that she had stopped asking him. The child had developed a low opinion of his abilities over a period of time and found it easiest to claim incompetence. Feelings of helplessness exaggerate any real or imagined problem. In such a situation, a parent can demonstrate the chores and work with the child until he feels competent to do them alone. Encouragement helps the child to persist until he is able to finish a job independently.

General rules

Dreikurs lays down general rules for handling of all problem behaviors. Be firm with children, know what your own limits are, and be ready to act on them. "Don't give in, but don't fight" is his advice. Often when a parent is firm and specific, that is enough to stop misbehavior. The tone of voice is firm, the parent gazes steadily at the child, and the child responds. For example, many of us have had the experience of driving in a car with children who are laughing, playing, or bickering. A parent may half-heartedly say, "Stop." When such behavior becomes a threat to safe driving, the parent's tone changes—what was almost a request becomes a command, and the noisy roughhousing stops.

Decide what you want to do in a particular situation, and then follow through. When a parent tells a child to do something and the child refuses, the parent must be prepared to enforce the instruction. When Jody screams and yells to get attention, her mother cannot physically silence Jody. But the mother can take Jody to her room and let her scream there.

Whenever possible, all family members should be involved in the decision-making process for handling problems. When everyone has an opportunity to express their needs and opinions about possible solutions, a compromise that meets those needs can be hammered out. This is done in family councils.

Handling problem behaviors

Dreikurs advises two techniques for handling problem behaviors: the method of logical and natural consequences, and the family council. A logical consequence is the natural outcome of misbehavior in which parents do not interfere. When children experience the logical consequences of misbehavior—for example, eating cold food because they are late for dinner—they learn to anticipate the consequences and to avoid them by not repeating the misbehavior.

Because the consequences are the result of the child's misbehavior, the child and not the parent is responsible for the child's discomfort. The violation brings the penalty, not the parent. Instead, the parent remains friendly and undisturbed. The following incident illustrates the method of logical and natural consequences. When a three-year-old crayoned on the walls, the mother told her that they would not be able to go to the beach until she, the mother, washed off the marks. She asked the daughter to help, but after cleaning for a few minutes the girl wandered off. Every few minutes the child came back and asked when they were going to the beach. The mother replied calmly, "As soon as we get this wall cleaned." The child did not complain when she learned that it was too late to go to the beach.

Logical consequences differ from punishment in several ways. Logical consequences are directly related to what the child has done—if children do not put their clothes in the laundry, they have no clean clothes. A punishment may have no logical relationship to what the child has done—a spanking is not the direct result of being late for a meal, but is the result of the parent's authority. The method of logical consequences does not place moral blame or pass moral judgment on the child. The child has made a mistake and pays the price. The parent stands by as an adviser, rather than acting as a judge. Punishment implies that the child has committed a "wrong" act and must atone for the offense. The method of logical consequences is not always as simple as standing by and letting the natural outcome of the act teach the child not to repeat the act. Parents must sometimes take a more active role. They must be careful not to turn the consequences into punishment by the comments they make. They must not criticize the child or angrily label the child. If a parent, for example, seems gleeful when a child suffers consequences—"You did not finish your homework and now you are paying the price! What did I tell you?"—the value of the method is lost. Children then experience the consequences as punishment, and they resent the parent's reaction.

In some situations parents will have to supply the consequences, because not all misbehavior results in unpleasant outcomes. For example, when a child bites or hits another child, the consequence is a howl from the recipient. There is no discouraging consequence unless the other child takes action. Dreikurs indicates that when a child bites, a parent may want to bite back to demonstrate that a bite hurts. Similarly, if a child hits a parent hard, the mother may comment that she, too, can hit. She may then hit the child playfully, but in a way that hurts slightly. Some parents may find biting and hitting too physically aggressive and may choose, as a substitute consequence, to restrict the child to her room.

Logical consequences cannot be used when they result in danger to the child. We cannot allow a child to run into the street and be hit by a car to teach him to stay out of the street. Parents can restrict a child to a safe place—either to the house or to the backyard—until he has learned to stay away from the street.

When a problem persists and affects all family members, a family council can lead to solutions. Very young children can participate, too—Dreikurs gives examples of four-year-olds being involved. Parents can include any child old enough to verbalize reactions. Weekly meetings give parents and children opportunities to bring up all kinds of family matters. Family members can voice complaints, vote on various solutions, and accept the majority vote. If a solution does not work, it can be changed at the next meeting. Plans that affect everyone—vacations, major expenditures, choice of a car—can be discussed. No topic is forbidden, and no one has a larger say than anyone else. Dinkmeyer and McKay summarize the family council:

> The meeting can provide a unique setting in which to reveal positive as well as negative feelings, where children learn to listen to each other, and parents have an opportunity to listen to the child's perception of his needs and place in the family.
>
> The family meeting is not a magical solution to human relationships; it can be only as effective as the good intentions and listening skills of the participants. But it should provide a special opportunity to restore the human relationships within the family which the pace of modern living, television, and the mobile society have stolen from us.[5]

Dreikurs' strategy stresses strong belief in the competence and ability of the child to function and contribute to the family, encouraging the child to develop abilities, and using the method of logical and natural consequences and family councils to handle problems. Although his system focuses primarily on the child's behavior and the parent's response to the child, Dreikurs, like Ginott, sees emotions as the mainspring to all action. Because he considers emotions important, though not the primary focus of his system, he discusses communication with children. His ideas are similar to those of Gordon. Parents need to find out what their children are feeling and thinking, and they must accept the child's point of view and logic. There are no right or wrong feelings. However, parents need to understand feelings so that they can respond more effectively to change the child's behavior.

Dreikurs does recommend that a parent use a direct approach to expressing needs. What he suggests is similar to sending an I-message to stimulate mutual problem-solving. For example, "I have a problem. When I am trying to get dinner on the table and you want me to help with your homework, I get confused trying to do two things at a time. What do you think we should do?" Such open communication wins cooperation from children. When family members express needs and feelings openly, they can find ways of interacting that are enjoyable for all.

Should parents express their angry feelings toward children? In general, Dreikurs urges parents to remain friendly, calm, and impersonal. However, children do try to frustrate parents. And sometimes parents respond with anger, even when they know that will not change the child's behavior. If we lose control and spank the child, what then? We should not insist that we did it for the child's sake, but admit to ourselves that we did it out of frustration. We are then better able to live with our feelings and cope with the child. We accept our mistakes and go on trying.

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION

Parenting strategies that focus on changing the child's behavior by means of rewards, punishments, and modeling are referred to as behavior modification. Behaviorists believe infants are born helpless but with the capacities to adapt to many different cultural and social groups. Day-to-day experiences with parents, other family members, and larger social groups, as well as experiences with the world of objects, mold the child's behavior so he learns to function effectively in his particular society. Caregivers and other individuals teach children all they learn in the early years, so they have a tremendous responsibility for how children develop. Behavior modification is the one approach that emphasizes the role of parent as authority. This emphasis stems directly from the view that children learn everything from other people.

Behaviorists pay much less attention than the other strategists to the feelings of children and parents. They assume that positive emotional and attitudinal changes will occur as behavior changes. However, behaviorists do inquire into feelings, in order to determine the most appropriate rewards and punishments. For example, they need to know a child's likes and dislikes to select the most effective reinforcements for behavior. They need to know when children are fearful so they can teach new responses to the stimuli that trigger fears. They urge parents to be warm and nurturing so that their rewards will have great impact. As children grow, parental warmth, attention, approval, and praise are more powerful reinforcers than any material rewards. However, feelings are considered primarily as a basis for determining how to change the child's behavior. The effects of rewards and punishments depend, in part, on the characteristics of the individual who is learning. What is a reward for Suzy is not a reward for Mary; what helps Johnny to learn to read does not help Jimmy. Thus, behaviorists are interested in the unique characteristics of each child.

Definition of terms

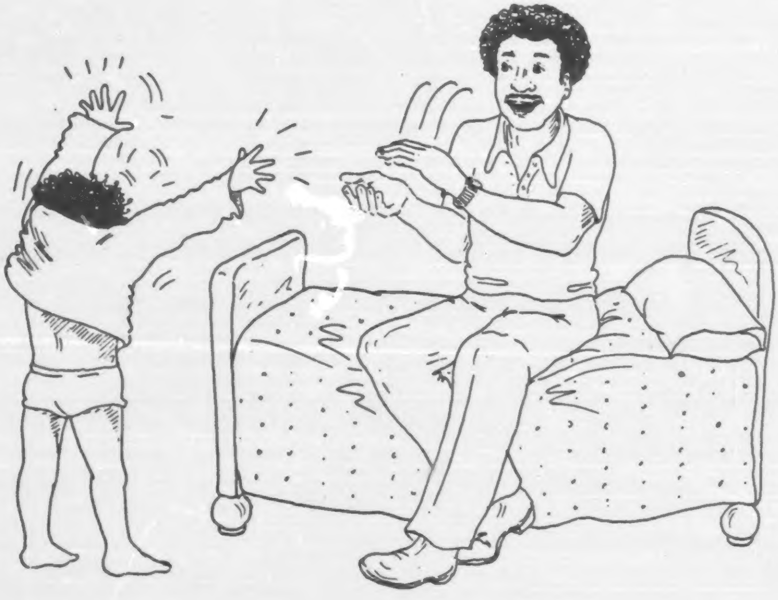
The key concepts of behavior modification are learning, stimulus, response, reward, punishment, generalization, extinction, shaping behavior, and modeling. Each of these terms has a special meaning when used in a discussion of behavior modification. *Learning* is defined as a change in behavior that occurs as a result of experience. The learning process consists of making new connections between stimuli and responses. For example, when an infant is given a cup for the first time, she may grab it by the rim and turn it upside down to see what is on the bottom. As the child has more experience with a cup and realizes that when she grabs it and turns it over, the contents spill, she will learn to pick it up and mouth it, finally drinking from it. With experience, the stimulus of cup triggers a careful grasping and drinking, and a new response is attached to that cup. A *stimulus* is the trigger or cue for an act or *response* that follows. The nipple is the stimulus for sucking because it triggers the response of sucking. The older brother's making a face is the stimulus for the three-year-old's response of hitting.

When a stimulus-response pattern leads to a positive consequence or *reward*—a cookie, a parent's smile, extra privileges—the behavior is likely to occur again. When the pattern receives no reward or leads to a negative consequence, a *punishment*—a parent's frown or loss of a privilege—the behavior pattern decreases. When the behavior disappears, we say it is extinguished, or has undergone *extinction.*

In some situations, the child is not able to carry out the behavior we want to reward. A child of three may not be able to dress himself so we can reward him. Parents must then shape behavior by rewarding his gradual, step-by-step approach. At first parents will reward Johnny for putting on his shoes by himself; later they will reward him when he pulls on his tee shirt by himself; and finally they will reward him when he can pull his pants on. Over a period of time, the child is able to do more and more, until he is able to carry out the whole act of dressing alone. This process of *shaping behavior* is particularly useful with young children who are learning many different skills step-by-step.

Children also learn by observing *models* and imitating them. A four-year-old imitates the mother's care of a two-year-old sister and reaps the reward of a big smile from daddy. Imitation of a model will occur even when the child receives no reward. Observation of another person's behavior is enough to stimulate imitation. Children often do as we do and not as we say because they have observed us and are imitating our behavior instead of obeying our words. Research indicates that children are most likely to imitate models who are warm, nurturing, and powerful. In extreme circumstances, when there is no model of warmth and power to copy, children will imitate a hostile, rejecting figure.

Children generalize what they learn in one situation and apply it to another—once a response has been linked with a particular stimulus, that response will occur



to similar stimuli. Thus, one need not experience all possible stimulus-response-reward conditions in order to learn. For example, children associate pleasure with drinking milk. They generalize this response to all liquids and will be willing to drink any liquid, even if it is a poison. Visual similarity is an important basis for generalizing initially. The development of language also facilitates generalization. With words a child can apply learning to a situation that appears different in many respects from the original stimulus. For example, a nursery school child who associates pleasure and warmth with the word *teacher* may respond to elementary school teachers in a positive way. Both individuals have the same label, *teacher*, even though the classroom settings and tasks are different.

When teaching new behaviors, parents can facilitate learning by *identifying and providing cues* for approved behavior. For example, a verbal cue, "In five minutes, we clean up," or "When the television program is over, you take a bath," indicates what is to come and stimulates the child to respond correctly. Material cues—like signs, notes, or special messages—can serve as reminders to do a chore, complete an assignment, or take a report to school.

Parents also teach children to discriminate between cues so that behavior is appropriate. For example, hugging and kissing are acceptable with family and friends, but not with strangers; some topics of conversation are approved at meal times, others are not. Teaching the child the cues for correct behavior can be done in several ways—rewarding behavior only when it occurs in the approved setting, modeling the correct behavior, giving verbal rules that identify the cues.

We know some of the conditions that facilitate learning. First, the stimulus that triggers the response must be noticeable. What is clear to the person teaching is not necessarily noticeable to the person learning. Part of the knack of parenting, and of teaching, is being aware of the learner's point of view and presenting material so that the most important elements are the most noticeable stimuli. Second, the child must be paying attention; a certain state of arousal is required so stimuli are noticed. If a child is very tired, involved in another task, or upset by some event, learning is less likely to occur.

Rewards and punishments

The speed of learning is influenced by the frequency of rewards. At first, rewarding after each successful act will increase the speed of learning. After a desired behavior is firmly established, rewards can be given irregularly or intermittently. Behaviors established by irregular reinforcement are more resistant to extinction than behavior established by regular reinforcement. Thus, parental inconsistency can, inadvertently, encourage undesirable behavior. For example, if a child is consistently punished for outbursts, she will stop having tantrums. But if some tantrums are successful—if the child gets her own way and is not punished—those tantrums are, in behaviorist terms, being rewarded. Parents should understand that when they are inconsistent in their reactions to a behavior, they are actually encouraging that behavior.

The timing of the reward is also important. Studies indicate that rewards are most effective if given while the child is just starting or is in the process of an

BOX 4-1
OBSERVATION CHART

Joanie—age 3	*Picking up toys after playing*													
Number of times	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
Yes	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	4	3	4	6	6	6
No	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	2	2	2

activity. Rewards given after the act is completed are less effective. Parents who are observant and watch what children do will find that rewards are most effective if given while the child is performing the desired behavior.

Punishment is effective in controlling behavior. However, the timing and the manner in which it is carried out influence its effectiveness. Punishment given while the child is in the act has greater impact than delayed punishment. Thus, it is wise for the parent who is caring for the child to administer the negative consequences (punishment) rather than waiting for the return of the other parent. Punishment combined with a statement of the rule that was broken and the reason for the punishment is more effective than punishment alone. Thus, silent removal of the child to his room, or removal with the remark, "You know what you did wrong," is less useful than taking the child to his room and giving him a clear description of what he did wrong and why he is being punished.

How are the behaviorist techniques applied in day-to-day parenting? First, parents must look at the child's behavior carefully and decide what is acceptable and what is unacceptable.

Whether parents want to increase or decrease behaviors, they must first observe and count the behaviors of interest. A piece of graph paper is useful. The chart shown in Box 4-1 presents a two-week record of observations of one behavior. One should count for several days (preferably a week) before intervening. Then chart how the behavior changes as rewards or punishments are given. The behavior of interest must be clearly stated and easily observed—for example, the number of times the child picks up toys after playing.

Intervention

Many forms of interventions are possible. When a parent increases approved behaviors by using rewards or decreases disapproved behaviors by ignoring them or by stopping the child's activity, the parent is intervening. When parents begin to use either rewards or punishments, they must be consistent. Children need firm, safe boundaries that they can count on. If limits shift—if parents punish a behavior one day but approve it the next—children learn it is worthwhile to push against the limits just to see if they can get away with what they want. Thus, inconsistent parents will have a more difficult time with children, who will test limits more frequently than will children whose parents are firm.

Rules should be stated clearly and objectively. For example, "Wash hands before eating," "If you are on time for dinner, your food will be warm." "After you do homework, then you watch television." Rules should be accompanied by reasons, so that children understand the rules. When parents present rules simply and give reasons for them, children learn to anticipate the consequences of their acts and can make realistic choices about behavior. If they know that dinner is served cold when they are late, they can decide whether they want cold food and can act accordingly. They then achieve control of their lives.

When parents have a clear idea of the behaviors they want to maintain or increase, they can plan appropriate rewards. Rewards fall into three general categories: *social rewards* of attention, smiles, approval, praise, physical affection; *material rewards* of food, presents, special purchases; and *privileges and activities*, like trips, special outings to the zoo, or permission to stay up late. Parents are wise to notice the kinds of rewards that appeal to their children and to make a list of activities and privileges that are particularly appealing to each child in the family. Behaviorists suggest that parents rely most heavily on social rewards because those bring the family closer together and create an atmosphere of warmth and trust. Within this category, however, individual preferences exist. Some children enjoy hugs and kisses, while others like verbal compliments.

When behavior patterns are being established, rewards are given after each successful act. Once the behavior occurs regularly, rewards can be given just occasionally. For example, when Jimmy first started picking up his clothes and putting them in the hamper, his mother commented every day about how helpful he was. As he continued, his mother remarked on it only when he did it rapidly.

How, specifically, should rewards be given? Eimers and Aitchison[6] have outlined seven specific steps. They believe social rewards of praise and approval are more effective than material rewards, because they are less costly, less formalized, and have lasting psychological benefits. Specific statements of praise and approval are informative. They may describe positive characteristics that children have not noticed, and thus increase self-esteem and self-confidence. The following are the seven recommended steps:

1. Make eye contact with your child. Direct eye contact makes the statement a more personal one.
2. Be physically close to your child. Praise given at close range has more impact.
3. Smile. Sometimes a smile alone is praise, but it should accompany the verbal message so that the child sees your pleasure in your facial expression.
4. Comment on positive behaviors. Send I-messages, telling the child what

you like about his or her behavior—"I like it when you help me carry in the groceries." Express appreciation when the child does you a favor—"Thank you for mailing my letter." Children blossom under this attention.

5. Focus on behavior, not on the child. Like every other strategist presented, behaviorists recommend comments on specific behaviors, not on the child's characteristics. "Doing dishes is a big help to me, Linda, and I appreciate it," not "What a good girl you are."
6. Show affection. How we handle our bodies—our gestures, moves, tone of voice—can increase the value of the praise and make the child feel very special. Again tailor the affectionate demonstration to the child.
7. Immediate delivery of reward. The faster the reward is given, the more effective it is.

Sometimes praise alone is not effective. Children may not want to carry out an activity no matter how approving a parent is. A school child may not like math and may refuse to work hard, even for social rewards. In this situation, tokens or a point system can be useful in motivating the child to take an interest. A token system is one in which children earn tokens or points that they can exchange for privileges or other rewards (see sample Reward Menu). If a child does not like math and is careless when doing homework, parents may want to establish a program in which the child can earn one token for every correctly completed math problem. At the end of the week, the child presents the homework, corrected by the math teacher, to the parent. The number of math problems correctly done determines the number of tokens earned.

As children improve their behavior, they must do more and more to obtain tokens. For example, as math improves, the child might earn only half a token for each problem correctly done in a week. Eimers and Aitchison[7] recommend giving social rewards of approval along with tokens, and eventually switching to social rewards alone. When math skills are firmly established, the entire system can be phased out.

BOX 4-2
REWARD MENU

Extra snack	5 Tokens	Play cards with parents	5 Tokens
Extra story read	5 Tokens	Play outside extra hour	10 Tokens
Extra game with parents	10 Tokens	Trip to park	10 Tokens
Trip to library	10 Tokens	Movie	15 Tokens
Special dinner menu	15 Tokens	Special hike	15 Tokens

Parents must be careful not to take approved behaviors for granted. They must continue to comment on the chores completed on time, the good report card, the clothes picked up. In the rush of everyday life, it is easy to forget the desirable behaviors performed by all members of the family. The sensitive parent continues to make comments on well-learned but much appreciated behavior.

Are rewards a form of bribery? This is a charge often made about the use of external rewards. Behaviorists reply that if rewards are increased when the child refuses to carry out an act, then the reward is a bribe. However, giving regular rewards for desirable behavior is nothing more than giving a realistic payoff, a common motivation for adults as well as children. For example, a paycheck is a payoff for work; a compliment to a co-worker expresses appreciation of some positive act. Why should we not do this with our children? To the extent that behaviorists rely on social rewards of attention, smiles, and praise, they are conveying positive feelings to the children in the same way that Gordon, Ginott, and Briggs recommend. Reflection of feelings and I-messages are not considered bribes, but they are social rewards that increase communication between child and parent. parent.

It is theoretically possible to rear children using only rewards. Parents can reward positive behaviors and give no reward to negative behaviors or reward an improved behavior so the negative behavior drops out. However, in the daily and unpredictable activities of life, this is not always practical or realistic We all use other methods besides reinforcements to guide children's behavior.

Behaviorists present an array of techniques for decreasing unacceptable behavior. They are: ignoring the behavior, mild social disapproval, time-out, denial of privileges, imposing penalties, and finally spanking. When parents identify unacceptable behavior they need to do two things. First, they must find the rewards that perpetuate the behavior, and they must eliminate the reinforcements. Second, they must find other responses that are acceptable and reward them. For example, when a parent wants to decrease a child's hyperactive behavior in the house, she looks for the rewards of the hyperactivity. Perhaps a brother and sister reinforce each other with much laughing and joking as they chase each other up and down the stairs. To stop these rewards, the parent could separate the children or could have the two play outside. To promote quiet activities, the parent might get out paints or crayons and paper and give rewards of attention as each child draws a picture.

A variety of techniques are used to eliminate the rewards of unacceptable behavior—ignoring the behavior, mild social disapproval, time-out, denial of privileges, and spanking. The simplest method is to ignore the behavior. Parents need not respond to what the child is doing. However, parents must be sure to ignore the behavior in every way. They must not say anything, or change their facial expressions, or interrupt what they are doing. Sometimes children gain their parent's attention and then are indirectly rewarded for a disapproved activity by the parent's annoyed expression. Eimers and Aitchison believe ignoring is most useful for temper tantrums, whining and sulking, and other attention getting behaviors.

Mild social disapproval can ward off a potentially troublesome situation and serve as a preventive measure. Eimers and Aitchison[8] have a seven-step method, comparable to their method of delivering praise, for expressing disapproval.

1. Make eye contact with your child. This catches and holds the child's attention and is sometimes sufficient by itself to stop the behavior.
2. Be physically close to your child. The child knows you mean business.
3. Appropriate facial expression. The facial expression should reveal that you are concerned. With time, a disapproving look may halt the behavior.
4. Brief statement. State briefly and objectively what you want your child to do. Do not use general labels to describe the child ("Bad girl," "Lazy boy!"). Say instead, "I want you to clean up the mess" or "I want your help with the dishes." If verbal statements are long, children may come to enjoy them because of the attention. Do not explain or justify.
5. Calm tone of voice. All verbalizations are given in a conversational tone. Don't yell and scream; in fact, try a whisper in a child's ear and see what happens.
6. Consistent nonverbal gesture.
7. Immediate delivery. As soon as parents see some misbehavior starting, use mild social disapproval to stop it. For example, "Mary, please." When children roughhouse and the tumbling about gets more hectic, a well-timed statement to the effect that it might be time to stop, may end it before someone gets hurt.

When behavior changes in response to mild social disapproval, parents should be quick to praise and to reward with an appropriate gesture. What happens if mild social disapproval does not terminate the behavior? Then parents can take a more active role. They can remove privileges—"no television program today" or "no outdoor play after dinner." However, they must enforce the rule. Another method of intervention is "time-out." Time-out is a cooling off period, a way of separating children from difficult situations and giving them time to calm down. The parent removes the child to a safe but uninteresting area where there are no toys or distractions and insists that the child stay there for a specific period of time. The precise amount of time depends on the age of the child and the seriousness of the offense. It can vary from two or three minutes for a two-year-old to three to six minutes for an older child. Eimers and Aitchison recommend it for destructive behaviors to people or property.

In enforcing time-out, parents should remain calm. They should state the rule and the consequence as they remove the child: "You know you can't hit your brother. Time-out for five minutes." Ignore any talking by the child during time-out, because responding gives the child attention. Follow through quickly. As soon as you observe the violation, act.

When active interventions, like denying privileges or imposing time-out, do not work, is spanking recommended? Behavior modification strategists are the main proponents of spanking, but even they recommend it only for rare occasions, for several reasons. First, if parents rely primarily on spanking for discipline, children may behave well only under threat of physical punishment. When away from the spanking parent, children may run wild. Second, children who come from homes where physical punishment is frequently used tend to be more physically aggressive than peers. And so spanking leads to undesirable behavior by the children who are spanked. This does not mean that an occasional spanking has a disastrous effect. In one study,[9] 148 out of 150 parents reported spanking at one time or another, but few used it as the primary method of discipline. Most parents use physical punishment only in extreme situations that involve safety—running out in the street or trying to get out of a car before it stops, for example.

Contracting sessions are an expansion of the token system. When parents use tokens, they may do so to change one specific behavior or to reward the child for doing a particular chore. When parents want to reach agreement on several matters, and children are also asking for some changes, the family holds a contracting session. Such sessions are similar to Gordon's mutual problem-solving sessions or Dreikurs' family sessions. Contracting sessions are most appropriate with elementary school children and teen-agers, but verbal preschoolers can also participate.

In approaching the problem, parents need to be clear about the specific, positive behavior they want to see. You can make a list: (1) vacuuming once a week; (2) dusting once a week; (3) changing the bed once a week. Each task can be worth 30 points, and the total of 90 points can be exchanged for two car rides or staying out an extra hour on a weekend evening. You present the scheme to the teen-ager who agrees to clean her room once a week for that number of points. Then you monitor the behavior each week and give the number of points earned.

Now let's look at a more complicated example. Suppose you wish to decrease your seven-year old son's messiness. You decide he should do four things, hang up his coat, clean and put away his lunchbox, put away his toys, and put his dirty clothes in the hamper. The behaviors are clearly stated. Before you propose a contract, observe the boy's behavior—count how many times in a week he does these things. Eimers and Aitchison[10] suggest a chart to record behavior over a seven-day period.

One mother, after observing and counting for a week, discovered that her son had hung up his coat only once, and at no time had he put his dirty clothes in the hamper or put his toys away. When she told him what rewards he could earn with a point system, the child was excited and eager to try. Mother and child used the same form to record successful completion of each task.

After the system went into effect, the mother noticed dramatic differences in the child's behavior. After seven weeks, the child was picking up his toys and putting his dirty clothes in the hamper. The system was gradually phased out after the habits were established.

Some behaviorists disapprove of elaborate programs of special incentives because they are more formalized and less personal than social rewards, and can be financially costly. However, if a child has not responded to other strategies, special incentives may produce the desired results.

Behavior	*Sun.*	*Mon.*	*Tue.*	*Wed.*	*Thurs.*	*Fri.*	*Sat.*
1. Hang up coat							
2. Clean and put away lunchbox							
3. Put away toys							
4. Put dirty clothes in hamper							

The subtle cycle

The stimulus-response pattern of behavior is a subtle cycle that occurs in all human interaction. Both the stimulator and the responder participate, consciously or not, and each affects the other. We all do it, all the time—and it is important for each parent to be aware of this cycle and of her or his role in it, particularly with children.

You need to identify a child's unacceptable behavior before you can decide how to modify that behavior. Equally important, you need to look at your own behavior carefully, to discover whether you are, as part of the stimulus-response cycle, contributing to that behavior by, even unintentionally, encouraging it. If this is happening, you need to change your own behavior if you are to change the child's behavior.

For example, the father of a hyperactive five-year-old boy may be telling him to stop when he tears around the house, jumping on furniture and climbing on shelves. But the father's tone of voice may unintentionally convey admiration and a positive attitude. Or, a parent's increased attention to specific behaviors—like sibling fighting—may be enough of a reward to keep the behavior going, even though the attention is in the form of criticism. When a parent listens to a child only after the child shrieks or whines to get attention, the parent is reinforcing the yelling or whining. If you notice a child—perhaps she is the middle child of three, all less than five years old—only when she asks for help, you increase her dependency and her tendency to behave in a helpless fashion.

Because the stimulus-response pattern is a cycle, children can unintentionally reinforce their parents' unpleasant behavior. When a parent yells, a child may quickly start to do her chores or to pay attention to what is being said. This rewards the yelling, and the next time the parent needs to have the child's attention, the parent is likely to scream again.

The effective parent needs to learn to observe behavior—the child's behavior, and his or her own behavior. You will find that your observations are valuable in solving the child's behavior problems. And you will develop a skill that will enchance all your relationships.

We have reviewed the basic methods in behavior modification: be specific about what behaviors are acceptable and establish a program of rewards, preferably social rewards. Tell the child what behaviors you want to eliminate, and either give no rewards or dispense punishments. Rely on modeling, shaping behavior, and contracting sessions to resolve family problems. Understand feelings so that you can use appropriate rewards and punishments to change behavior. Use as many social rewards as possible to establish a warm, trusting relationship. Move toward substitution of social rewards for material rewards and special incentives.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

What are the similarities and differences among the various strategies discussed? How do you decide which approaches are right for you and for your children?

Both Dreikurs and the behaviorists focus on changing children's behavior and pay attention to feelings only so long as such understanding helps to change behavior. However, the two strategies emphasize different roles for parents in modifying behavior. Dreikurs' system emphasizes democratic family living, in which everyone's needs are respected and all members contribute opinions about rules. Parents win cooperation from children by using encouragement and praise. They do not use external rewards and punishments but rely, in a calm, friendly fashion, on the method of natural and logical consequences.

Behavior modification describes a more active role for parents. As authorities, they decide on the rules for the family and control children's behavior by giving rewards and punishments. They devise systems to help them understand and monitor behavior. Although social rewards of smiles, attention, approval, and praise are advocated as the main rewards, behaviorists use punishment and will resort to spanking if necessary to decrease certain behaviors.

Let us now briefly contrast these two methods with the three strategies presented in Chapter Three. Ginott, Gordon, and Briggs emphasize respect for each child's competence and skill in coping with life. The main tool used by parents in helping children develop is the acceptance and reflection of the children's feelings and their own feelings. When feelings are accepted and reflected, children gain self-esteem and self-confidence, because they see that parents value their experiences. According to Gordon and Briggs, children will then be able to resolve their own problems or work with parents to solve problems in mutually satisfying ways. Ginott is more likely than Gordon to intervene to set limits for children's behavior and to take action if handling feelings does not resolve difficulties. In this way Ginott is like Dreikurs and the behaviorists.

The most significant differences among the strategies are the differences in the *emphasis* given to various principles. For example, although Dreikurs and the behaviorists do not consistently urge parents and children to express their feelings to each other, both advise that parents praise and encourage children to foster positive feelings in them. Furthermore, they urge parents to understand both their own and their children's feelings so that they can deal more effectively with behavior. Although Ginott, Gordon, and Briggs do not stress changing the child's behavior, they do set and enforce limits that shape the child's behavior. Enforcement is either by direct action, as advised by Ginott, or by I-messages and mutual problem-solving sessions, as advised by Gordon and Briggs.

The behaviorists are the only ones who use explicit rewards, such as special privileges. Nevertheless, all strategies use praise, encouragement, and interest in desired behaviors as rewards. Similarly, behaviorists use explicit punishments, but other strategies advise using intervening in ways that children find undesirable as punishment. Ginott calls it taking action that is not punitive (for example, time-out). Dreikurs says that removing the criticism and hostility from some forms of punishment make them natural and logical consequences of behavior. Gordon advocates a family atmosphere of communication and open expression of feelings. In this environment, silence and ignoring behaviors that are not valued by parents can be punishments.

Table 4.1 summarizes the similarities among the strategies. The major goal of parenting, the importance of modeling, communication of at least positive feelings, respect for children, importance of praise, avoiding ridicule and shaming, criticism of the idea that love is enough—these are features of all the methods. Making impersonal statements of rules, offering choices to children, being consistent in demands, emphasizing the needs of parents, viewing the child in a positive light are agreed on by most of these strategists. The main disagreements are in the use of external rewards and punishments, parents' expression of their anger at children, differing emphases on the uniqueness of the child, and the use of preventive statements to ward off trouble.

Do all these strategies share some deficiencies? Yes. The effects of sex differences on parents' behaviors or on forms of intervention are not discussed in detail. Parents need to be aware of the subtle differences in the ways mothers and fathers interact with children and of the different effects interventions may have, depending on the sex of the child. As we apply parenting strategies, we need to be alert to differences in results stemming from the child's sex.

Another deficiency is the tendency to minimize the effects of age on the application of the methods. Each strategy tends to separate the problems of children in early and middle childhood from the problems of adolescence. But that is often the extent of the concern with age of the child in relation to parenting behavior. Yet parents need to have greater awareness of the effects of age and level of development on parents' application of these methods. There is also little guidance on how to help children develop optimal levels of functioning in intellectual and creative activities.

This book distills and synthesizes these strategies and shows how they are applied to the problems children experience at different ages. We have included in Chapters Five through Ten ideas about how to facilitate development of children in each of the age groups.

We have mentioned general deficiencies of several approaches. What are the drawbacks of each? Dreikurs' method may result in parents overstructuring household routine and family activities. In their zeal to influence children's behavior in friendly, calm, and democratic ways, parents may not spend enough time in direct interaction with their children. Parents may overvalue certain kinds of learning

TABLE 4-1
SIMILARITIES AMONG STRATEGIES

Specific aspect	*Baruch*	*Ginott*	*Gordon*	*Briggs*	*Dreikurs*	*Becker*	*Eimers & Aitchison*
Goal of responsibility	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Parent as model	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Child's ability to learn	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Respect for child	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Communication of feelings	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
No ridicule or shaming	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Importance of time, attention	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Criticize idea love is enough	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Use of praise	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Democratic living	x	x	x	x	x		

activities and push children to achieve in a socially meaningful way. If parents become too concerned with social group membership, they push conformity instead of meaningful social participation.

Gordon, Ginott and Briggs' methods may result in parents having unrealistic expectations of their children. If parents are too quick to provide opportunities for self-direction, the child may be left floundering, unable to handle freedom for which they are not ready. Because these strategies are less concerned about social groups, they may not be alert to the child's need to adapt to social norms. When parents give children freedom to develop their own solutions, parents may minimize their own needs and fail to communicate to children external constraints on their solutions.

Research

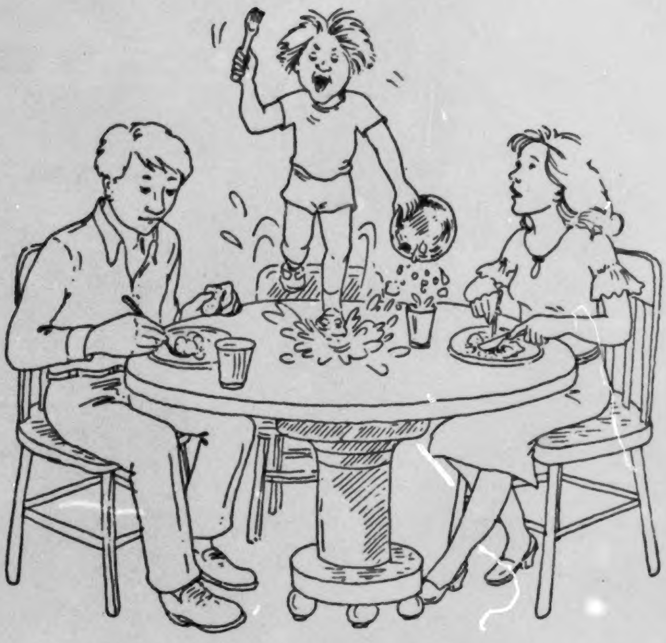
Research indicates that all of the strategies discussed in this book are effective in reducing problem behaviors. And there is evidence, from sophisticated and carefully controlled research, that a subtle blending of the strategies for communicating feelings, structuring the environment, and setting clear limits for children's behavior help children to develop optimally.

Specific aspect	*Baruch*	*Ginott*	*Gordon*	*Briggs*	*Dreikurs*	*Becker*	*Eimers & Aitchison*
Impersonal statement of rules	x	x		x	x	x	x
Consistency	x	x		x	x	x	x
Needs of parents	x	x	x	x	x		
Use of specified rewards						x	x
Use of specified punishment						x	x
Positive image of child	x	x	x	x	x		
Use of choice	x	x		x	x		x
Parents express anger			x			x	x
Distinguish deed and doer	x	x		x	x		
Uniqueness of child	x			x	x		
Preventive measures			x				x

Diana Baumrind has conducted careful research[11] on the effects of parents' childrearing practices on children's behavior. The findings suggest that parents who are accepting and who also provide structure and limits have the most competent children. Baumrind identified three patterns of childrearing: (1) authoritative, (2) authoritarian, and (3) permissive.

Authoritative parents exercise firm control of the child's behavior, but also emphasize the independence and individuality in the child. Although the parents have a clear notion of present and future standards of behavior for the child, they are rational, flexible, and attentive to the needs and preferences of the child. Furthermore, they are open to communications from children, paying attention to the child's preferences and interests and supplying an enriched environment to stimulate development. "Authoritative parents, by contrasts, balanced what they offered with what they demanded. They balanced high control with high independence-granting, high standards for maturity with much support and nurturance."[12] Their children were self-reliant, self-confident and explored their worlds with excitement and pleasure.

Authoritarian parents employ a similar firm control, but use it in an arbitrary, power-oriented way without regard for the child's individuality. They emphasize control, without nurturance or support to achieve it. Baumrind writes,



"The authoritarian parent values obedience as a virtue and believes in restricting the child's autonomy. This parent values the preservation of order and traditional structure as an end in itself. He or she does not encourage verbal give and take, believing that the child should accept the parent's word for what is right."[13] Children of authoritarian parents, relative to other groups of children, were unhappy, withdrawn, inhibited and distrustful.

Permissive parents set few limits on the child. They are accepting of the child's impulses, giving as much freedom as is possible while still maintaining physical safety. Also they appear cool and noninvolved. Permissive parents sometimes allow behavior that angers them, but they do not feel sufficiently comfortable with their own anger to express it. As a result, the anger builds up to unmanageable proportions. They then lash out and are likely to hurt the child more than they want to. Their children are the least independent and self-controlled, and could be best classified as immature.

Extensive studies of self-esteem and the family and school behaviors related to it reveal that self-esteem is an important ingredient in effective functioning. Elementary school boys high on self-esteem have more self-confidence, more energy, are more creative, self-expressive, and assertive than boys with low self-esteem. High self-esteem boys do not possess more objective advantages in terms of good looks, higher intelligence or higher socioeconomic status, but they trust themselves and other people and consequently are freer to interact with others with a minimum of hostility and anxiety. Preschoolers who are high on self-esteem engage comfortably in a variety of activities with skill and independence.

The childrearing practices that enhance the development of self-esteem resemble those used by Baumrind's authoritative parent, who uses warm acceptance, attention to individuality with definite limits, and high but reasonable, expectations. Stanley Coopersmith, who has studied the development of self-esteem, describes a stimulating family atmosphere as follows:

> The treatment associated with the formation of high self-esteem is much more vigorous, active, and contentious than is the case in families that produce children with low self-esteem. Rather than being a paradigm of tranquility, harmony and open-mindedness, we find that the high self-esteem family is notable for the high level of activity of the individual members, strong-minded parents dealing with independent, assertive children, stricter enforcement of more stringent demands, and greater possibilities for open dissent and disagreement. This picture brings to mind firm convictions, frequent and possibly strong exchanges, and people who are capable and ready to assume leadership and who will not be treated casually or disrespectfully. The parents apparently start with many of these characteristics as part of their personality structure and by early adolescence their children are well on the way to being assertive persons in their own right: The child reared under these conditions would have a good deal of experience with adults, particularly strong-minded ones who would help him achieve his own self-definition. In addition, the procedure of establishing limits within which discussion and disagreement can occur increases the possibility of communication and the development of mutual knowledge and respect.[14]

Contributions to a problem-solving approach

In Chapter One we advocated a five-step problem-solving approach to childrearing. How does each of the five strategies discussed in this book contribute to a problem-solving approach to children's behavior?

The first step is to identify the problem. All strategies help here. When parents and children communicate feelings, each shares information that helps the other to determine what is really bothering or upsetting the child and/or the parent. Sometimes the obvious problem is not the real one, and sharing feelings can help reveal this, if everyone listens carefully. The communication process also enables parents and children to observe their own reactions and gain insights about themselves. Dreikurs' approach of identifying the purpose of behavior also helps to identify the real problem. At times, feelings may be vague and general—irritation or frustration—and the exact causes are not known. It is not until the purpose of the behavior is identified that we realize what the exact problem is.

The behaviorist approach of clearly specifying approved and disapproved behaviors, of counting and observing behaviors, also is useful in specifying the problem. Often, parents blow up a small problem into unmanageable proportions.

When the behavior is actually counted, parents may find that the child does less wrong or more right than they thought.

The second step is to develop a plan of action, and the third is to act. All strategies provide useful suggestions about possible actions. Sometimes it is enough to simply recognize and validate the child's emotional responses. Other times, parents may have to stand by and let the child suffer the natural consequences of his behavior. When a child is aggressive with another child or involved in possibly dangerous activity, more forceful action—for example, limiting the child's behavior with a time-out—may be necessary. Once parents take action, they must give the intervention a fair trial before deciding whether it works. All strategies urge parents to practice the particular techniques. The fourth step is evaluating the action and its effects. If the intervention does not seem to work, we must ask ourselves whether we are using the method correctly. Examination of our behavior and of the child's reaction provides clues about why the intervention is not working and what alternative might be most effective to try next.

The fifth step is to start again, if necessary. All strategies urge parents to try and try again if first efforts are not successful. In his groups, Ginott supported all the mothers as they sought solutions. If they were not successful in changing behavior, even when using the method correctly, he pointed out that children do not learn once and for all. They learn gradually, and parents must be prepared to confront the same problems several times while continuing to respect the child as an individual.

Gordon, too, describes the need for assessing the effect of interventions and coming back over and over to resolve problems in new ways, if necessary. Dreikurs stresses the importance of striving for improvement, not for perfection, and of being self-accepting if we have difficulties changing our behavior with children. Behaviorists advise parents to try and try again as a main technique in working out problems.

When the problem-solving approach is combined with the parental qualities and behaviors all strategies advise—parental modeling of desired traits, respect for the child's and one's own needs, confidence that the child can learn what is necessary, sharing of problems and solutions in family meetings—then parents can foster the growth and development of the child. Each individual has a unique potential to discover and develop. Arnold Gesell and Frances Ilg state it well:

> When asked to give the very shortest definition of life, Claude Bernard, a great physiologist, answered "Life is creation." A newborn baby is the consummate product of such creation. And he in turn is endowed with capacities for continuing creation. These capacities are expressed not only in the growth of his physique, but in the simultaneous growth of a psychological self. From the sheer standpoint of creation this psychological self must be regarded as his masterpiece. It will take a lifetime to finish, and in the first ten years he will need a great deal of help, but it will be his own product.[15]

Parents have the privilege of serving as guide and resource as the child creates the unique "psychological self."

SUMMARY

Dreikurs' strategy emphasizes the child's basic competence and desire to be an effective member of the social group. In an atmosphere of democratic family life, the child learns and grows, making mistakes and learning from them. Dreikurs advises parents to accept their own mistakes and their children's and to work for improvement, never for perfection. While advocating that parents adopt a calm, friendly attitude toward children, letting natural and logical consequences teach children to change their behavior, he recognizes that parents flare up and need to express their anger.

The behaviorist strategy emphasizes changing children's behavior by means of rewards and punishments, by shaping positive behaviors with rewarding little steps, and by modeling. Behaviorists stress the importance of clearly defining problem behaviors, counting them to note their frequency and how the behaviors change in response to various rewards or punishments. Behaviorists provide a variety of techniques for rewarding children, and they suggest use of material and social rewards as well as special trips and privileges. Similarly, they suggest a wide array of punishments, from ignoring unacceptable behavior to requiring time-out. Only rarely do behaviorists recommend that a parent spank the child. Like the other strategists, they recommend contracting or family sessions.

The five strategies discussed in this chapter and the previous one have been compared. A combination of techniques—communicating feelings in a well-structured family setting—seems most helpful in rearing competent, curious, active children who like both themselves and others.

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5

Pregnancy and delivery

This period is one of excitement and many changes as parents begin the important business of nurturing the new life they have created together. Women's bodies change; their emotions are unpredictable and intense; they may experience new emotional highs and lows. Fathers look at the future in a new light, particularly if this is a first child and both parents have a sense of having truly established a new family unit. However, each additional child, too, more firmly solidifies an adult's feeling of being a parent.

It is impossible to describe how any one parent will feel during pregnancy and delivery, because each person experiences so many feelings during these months and because different people feel so differently about events at this time. Although we often recognize that this is a momentous time for mothers, we must also recognize that fathers, too, have many feelings to handle. For both parents, the major tasks of this period are to accept the new life that is coming into the family and to begin to form an attachment that is intensified by the child's arrival and the events of the labor and delivery.

When the pregnancy is planned, or unplanned but happily accepted, the parents are likely to feel elation, joy, pleasure, and satisfaction. They feel they have achieved a new sense of who they are, a new sense of their own purpose in life. However, many parents are surprised they are not more pleased and excited, since they have planned carefully for the event. Instead, they worry about the coming changes and the increasing responsibilities a new child will bring. When the pregnancy is unplanned and unwelcomed, the parent or parents will have to decide whether to continue the pregnancy. A decision to continue means the child is accepted at this point. The earlier such choice is made, the earlier parents can make preparation for a healthy pregnancy and delivery.

The mother's life style particularly will change. Her body is no longer her own. She will eat certain amounts and kinds of foods, get exercise, and rest at certain intervals. The reactions of both the mother and the father to the coming child depend not only on the circumstances of the conception and pregnancy, but also on a host of attitudes and feelings that relate to past events. Their reactions to their bodies, themselves, each other, their own parents and childrearing experiences, as well as the number of supports they have currently outside the family (job satisfaction, friends) all influence the parents' feelings about the coming of this particular child.

The relationship between father and mother changes during the pregnancy. Women have a more intimate connection with the child and what is happening and as a result, fathers may feel left out, excluded from a very important family event. However, there will be a sharing of a heightened emotional experience that brings many couples closer together. At this time, the single mother will begin to get a sense of what it is like to rear a child alone. She will not be able to talk over day-to-day changes with the father, nor will she receive emotional support from him. She should begin to build a network of friends she can call upon for long talks and for help if she needs it.

PRENATAL CARE

Throughout pregnancy the mother needs a good diet, appropriate exercise, rest, and enough sleep to maintain her own health and to provide the best possible start for the child Pediatrician David Smith[1] writes, in *Mothering Your Unborn Baby*, that this is a crucial time, because prenatal growth is very rapid and has long-term implications for later behavior. Smith recommends a diet of 2400 calories per day with selections from the four major food groups: (1) milk and milk servings (two servings each day); (2) meat and high protein foods (two or more servings each day, with emphasis on low-fat proteins like chicken, fish, beans, peas, nuts); (3) fruits and vegetables (four or more servings each day); and (4) cereal and grain products (four servings each day). Your appetite should determine how much you eat, as long as servings include these foods. Smith suggests only an iron supplement; because he believes a balanced diet provides all the basic vitamins and minerals a pregnant woman needs. Some doctors add calcium or general vitamin supplements. Each woman's build and size will influence the specific number of pounds she gains, but this should be about twenty-five pounds.

Cyril Young[2] recommends moderate exercise in noncontact sports. Mothers can continue regular programs of tennis, golf, swimming, and walking provided they have no complications of pregnancy, and excessive fatigue does not occur. In addition, they may add exercises to tone the body for childbirth. Daily rest periods in which the mother relaxes completely are essential. Sitting or lying down with legs raised is especially helpful.

Young believes that unless a woman is advised by her doctor to stop working, or she works in an environment that contains substances that endanger the unborn child, she can work as long as she likes. A woman who is having some bleeding or one who has a history of miscarriages might be advised to stop working. Alice Rossi[3] has raised the question of whether stress experienced by a pregnant woman in her work environment will affect the unborn child adversely. As yet, we do not have specific evidence for a general statement, but each woman is advised to discuss with her doctor the particular setting in which she works and her own individual stress pattern.

As early as possible in the pregnancy, a woman should choose an obstetrician and make an appointment for about six weeks from the end of her last period. You should be aware that when you choose a doctor you are also choosing the place of delivery. If you want to have your baby at home, if you want to have the father present during labor and delivery, if you want a rooming-in arrangement after the baby is born, you need to select an obstetrician who will cooperate and who practices in a hospital that provides for your needs.

On the basis of information gathered during interviews with mothers and from questionnaires and a review of medical journal articles, Carole McCauley[4] suggests the following guidelines for choosing an obstetrician:

1. Talk with parents, particularly any who are nurses and have special knowledge, and consider their recommendations.
2. Be critical of the preferences of other parents—remember that they may value different qualities in a physician.
3. If you are a high-risk mother, find a doctor who has experience with mothers who have similar problems.
4. Choose a doctor you feel comfortable talking to and questioning. Don't pick a doctor who refuses to answer questions. Before committing yourself to a doctor's care, discuss with her or him all the subjects about which you are concerned—for example, prepared childbirth, father's participation, medication, and home delivery.
5. Avoid the busiest doctor in town. He or she may be a fine physician but will probably have little time for personal attention.
6. Select a doctor who is interested in learning from your questions and who has or will get all the information you need—for example, about genetic counseling.
7. McCauley suggests avoiding any doctor who minimizes problems with words like "simply," or "only," or maximizes problems with words like "never," "all."
8. Reread your insurance policy to determine whether it covers everything you want and everything the doctor considers necessary.

Many obstetricians have firm views about the kind of childbirth classes you attend and about the role of the father during labor and delivery. If you have strong feelings about these matters, knowing how a doctor feels can help you decide whether she or he is the obstetrician for you.

HAZARDS DURING PREGNANCY

As our knowledge of fetal development increases and we learn more about how the unborn child is affected by environmental influences, the list of "don'ts" changes. For example, a few years ago, moderate alcohol use was approved; now alcohol intake is restricted. Thus, the pregnant woman needs to be constantly aware of whether activities or foods currently approved appear to have uncomfortable side effects on her or the quality of the baby's movements. She can then decide to avoid certain experiences.

The effects of harmful influences depend on when they occur in the pregnancy. From the second to the eighth week, the fetus is especially vulnerable, and it is during this period that many harmful agents can produce nongenetic malformations. The organism develops very rapidly during this period. Unfortunately, during much of this critical period, the woman does not know she is pregnant and is unaware of the need for protection from potentially harmful influences. It is particularly important, during the childrearing years, for a woman who may conceive to have a consistently healthy life style.

Poor diet—either too little food or food lacking in essential vitamins and minerals—affects both child and mother. If the mother's diet does not provide enough nourishment for the child, the child draws on the mother's supply of essential elements, and the mother's health suffers. If her supply is not adequate, the child has an increased risk of rickets, anemia, pneumonia, colds, and bronchitis. In addition, poor diet affects growth of the central nervous system and influences later intellectual development. Thus, the mother must be sure her diet is adequate.

The developing baby is sensitive to radiation. The effects of radiation depend on the age and the developmental status of the organism as well as on the amount of radiation. Retarded growth, including mental retardation, has been found to result from exposure of the pregnant mother to radiation. A body temperature of 103°F or more can cause problems. Such high temperatures are often associated with infection. However, pregnant women who use saunas for extended periods (Smith estimates fifteen minutes or longer) are found to have more problems in pregnancy and a higher rate of miscarriage, stillborns, and premature deliveries than women who do not.

When a mother with RH negative blood is pregnant with a baby with RH positive blood, there is the possibility that she may receive some of the baby's blood. Her body will then have a sensitive reaction to the foreign blood and will make antibodies that can harm the unborn child by destroying the baby's red blood cells. Fortunately, the bloods rarely mix except at the time of delivery or, sometimes, in the event of miscarriage. Thus, a first RH positive baby of an RH negative mother is usually safe from harm. There is a substance called RhoGAM that will prevent the manufacture of antibodies in the mother if the bloods mix. When injected into the mother, RhoGAM circulates in the mother's blood and destroys the baby's positive cells, and so the mother does not manufacture the antibodies. Every RH negative mother who gives birth to an RH positive baby should receive this injection within seventy-two hours of the birth. The injection is also given at the time of miscarriage or abortion. It entirely eliminates the possibility of harm due to antibodies.

Infections are known to affect the fetus. The effects of *German measles*, or *rubella*, a viral infection, depend on the stage of development when the mother contracts the disease. If rubella occurs in the sixth week, cataracts are likely to result; in the ninth week, deafness; in the fifth to tenth weeks, cardiac problems; and in the sixth to ninth weeks, dental deformities.

Untreated *syphilis* is known to have a profound impact on the baby in the latter part of pregnancy. About 30 percent of the fetuses die before delivery. Of those delivered, 70 percent will have the disease. Sometimes symptoms are seen at birth, but usually the child appears healthy at birth with lesions and symptoms developing later, sometimes years later.

A woman with the virus *genital herpes simplex* may infect her child when the baby passes through an infected birth canal. At present, there is no known cure for this disease which can cause a rash on the child, and more seriously, can result in the child's being mentally retarded. To avoid passage through the canal, the child is delivered by Caesarean section.

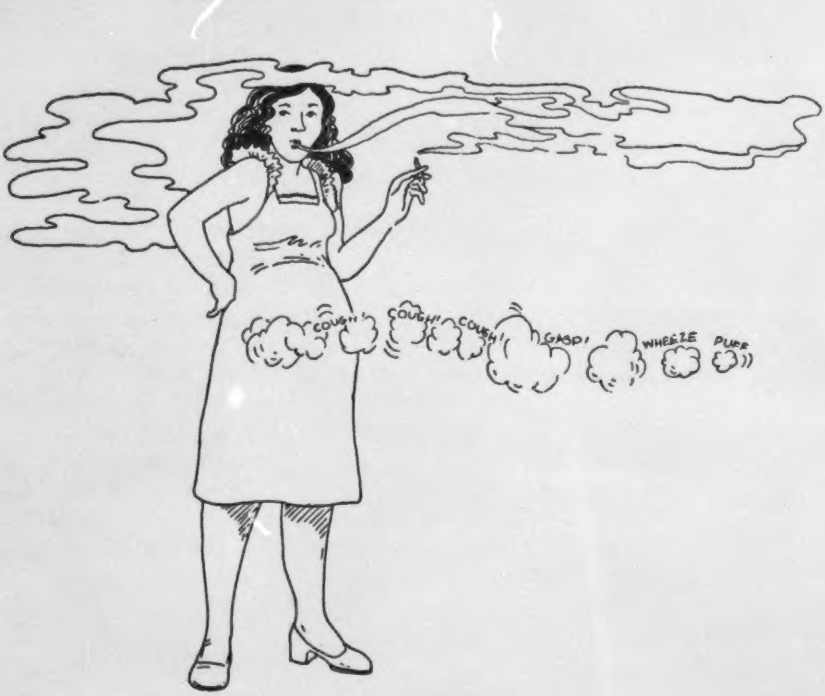
Cytomegalovirus infection (CID) is a rarely discussed infection that may damage as many as 1 percent of all babies in utero. The mother may never know she has the disease because the symptoms are fever, aches and pain. If it occurs during the first three months of pregnancy, the disease can produce deafness, mental deficiency or growth deficiency. Research is being conducted to develop a vaccination similar to the one used for rubella.

Toxoplasmosis is a relatively rare disease acquired by eating raw meat that is infected with the organism or by contact with a cat that has eaten such meat. Pregnant mothers are advised not to clean out cat litter boxes. The disease may be barely detectable in the adult—symptoms of upper respiratory infection are reported, or there may be no symptoms at all. However, this disease, like so many others, causes physical and mental growth deficiencies in the child.

Drugs that are apparently safe for the mother can have disastrous effects on the developing infant. *Thalidomide* provided a dramatic example several years ago. A small percentage of women who took the drug in early pregnancy bore infants who suffered from a wide variety of malformations: cleft palate, small ears, facial palsy, fused fingers and toes, dislocated hips, digestive, heart, and genitourinary malformations. Most noticeable of the defects were missing arms and legs, and hands and feet attached to the torso. The intelligence of those thalidomide children who do not have sensory defects appears average.

Drugs that are routinely prescribed also produce congenital defects. In one large-scale study, *two tranquilizers—meprobamate* and *chlordiazepoxide*—were found to produce congenital abnormalities if given during the first six weeks of pregnancy, during the time when the mother is least likely to know she is pregnant. Anticonvulsant drugs like *dilantin* and the *barbiturates* may have negative effects on the child also.

Mother's *smoking* is related to prematurity, lower birth weight, shorter length, and small head size of the child. Smoking also affects the child's heart rate and breathing in utero. The mother who smokes needs to realize that each time she



COUGH!!
COUGH!!
COUGH!!
GASP!
WHEEZE
PUFF

smokes her unborn child also has a cigarette. A study done in England[6] found that seven-year-old children of mothers who smoked more than ten cigarettes a day during pregnancy were three to five months behind in reading and math when compared to children whose mothers did not smoke.

Recently much attention has been focused on the fetal *alcohol* syndrome (FAS). In the early 1970s, doctors identified a group of babies—the children of alcoholic mothers—who were stunted in growth and development, small even for their weight, and hyperactive. The faces of some of these children were deformed, with asymmetrical features, low set eyes and small ears. Their intellectual growth was retarded. Follow-up studies of these children reveal that the damage is irreversible. When the fetal alcohol syndrome was first identified, experts believed that a steady, daily consumption of three to six ounces was needed to produce abnormalities in the infants. David Smith[7] reports that even two drinks a day can result in smaller babies. Women are now advised not to have more than one drink per day. If you are pregnant, remember that the more alcohol you drink, the greater the risk that your child will have abnormalities and the more severe the abnormalities are. If you are a heavy drinker, stopping at any time can reduce the risks to the child. Alcohol appears to exert its greatest impact during the period from three to four-and-a-half months.

Mind-altering drugs such as *heroin, morphine, methadone* and *LSD* affect prenatal development. Babies of heroin and morphine addicts are addicts at birth.

These infants exhibit withdrawal symptoms—including high-pitched crying, disturbed respiration, vomiting—some of which can lead to death. Often these babies are also premature and small and so are less able to survive such symptoms. Methadone, which is prescribed as a substitute for heroin, can produce more severe withdrawal symptoms for the baby than those produced by heroin. There are indications that LSD may lead to chromosomal damage, but it is difficult to carry out controlled studies because of the many other variables, such as poor diet and use of other drugs, that accompany LSD use. Smith says there is no evidence that marijuana causes damage in babies, but a very recent report indicates that marijuana "may be capable of causing miscarriages or birth defects."[8]

All the environmental factors that affect fetal development can be described as stresses for the developing organism. An additional source of stress is emotional upheaval experienced by the mother. Stress produces changes in the levels of the mother's hormones, especially adrenaline and noradrenaline, which can pass the placental barrier and be transported to the fetus. Severe anxiety in the mother during pregnancy has been associated with nausea, abortion, increased length of labor, and delivery problems. Anxious and emotionally upset mothers have babies who are more active during pregnancy and are more irritable, hyperactive, and restless following birth. Hyperactivity in infancy can influence the mother-child relationship by making child care more difficult for an already stressed mother. Thus, women who may be least able to cope with babies deliver babies who are most difficult to nurture.

Several of the harmful agents that increase deviations and malformations in the fetus have effects before a woman knows she is pregnant. These substances pass through the placental barrier, the fine mesh of cells that separates the child's blood from that of the mother. So it is important to remember that, even though we think of the mother and child as having a symbiotic relationship during pregnancy, the child is negatively affected by many substances that are not harmful to the mother.

In utero there are profound individual differences in the effects of the dangerous substances like thalidomide. Some babies exposed to that drug showed no effects. The effects of a given agent depend in part on the timing and the stage of fetal development at which it is experienced. For example, rubella, or German measles, has different effects at different times. Several different agents can produce the same effects; for example, several agents change the appearance of the face and the mental level of the child. On the other hand, one agent, like alcohol, can produce changes in several areas, including appearance and mental level.

Recent studies of hyperactivity in children provide an example of the complex relationship between prenatal events and childhood behavior. Hyperactivity is the most prevalent behavior disorder in childhood. It affects about 5 percent of the boys under the age of ten, as judged by their being brought for professional help. Research at the National Institute of Mental Health has led to the development of a simple, ten-minute examination that can be carried out in early infancy and is capable of identifying a significant proportion of potentially hyperactive children. This physical examination yields a measure of the congenital contribution by counting the number of physical anomalies, such as unusual ear lobes, widely spaced eyes, curved fingers. The differences are detectable to the trained observer and have been found to be related to hyperactivity. The number of these differences, not the pattern, is important. These physical defects are caused by various factors—chromosomal abnormalities, drug use by the mother, and obstetrical complications—that operate in the first three months of pregnancy. Hyperactivity is often associated with other behavior problems and with unpopularity among age mates. The social problems of hyperactive children often appear to be caused by personality difficulties. Early identification of these children could lead to effective help.

When early damage to the developing organism is severe, spontaneous abortion may occur. About 20 percent, perhaps as many as 33 percent, of all pregnancies are ended by spontaneous abortion. Roughly 28 to 33 percent of these spontaneous abortions result from chromosomal defects. Male fetuses are aborted far more often than female fetuses. About 130 to 140 boys are conceived for every 100 girls conceived; by the time of birth the ratio of boys to girls is 105 to 100. The reasons for the high rate of abortion of male fetuses is not known.

ASSESSING FETAL HEALTH

Amniocentesis is a technique used to obtain information about the physical characteristics and health of the developing organism. It is recommended for (1) women over 35, because they have the greater risk of bearing a child with defects (2) women who have already born children with defects, and (3) women with family histories of birth defects. Parents who are sure they will continue the pregnancy regardless of the results of amniocentesis are advised not to have it done, because there is a 1 percent chance of aborting the fetus.

The process is simple and relatively painless. A needle is inserted through the abdomen into the amniotic sac, and a small sample of fluid, which contains waste cells from the baby, is removed. The fluid and cells are then analyzed to detect sex and abnormalities in the child. The procedure, carried out when the woman is fourteen to sixteen weeks pregnant, can identify several kinds of defects: (1) defects like Down's syndrome or trisomy 21, which results from chromosomal damage and produces mental retardation; (2) defects caused by hereditary factors—hemophilia, failure of the blood to clot, and Tay-Sachs disease, a disorder that results in suffering and early death of the child; and (3) malformations in the brain and spine that occur in the course of development.

If abnormalities are found, parents can then decide what to do. Treatments of intrauterine defects are not now possible, although research is being done with the goal of increasing our capacity to intervene and correct defects. If amniocentesis reveals a disorder, the parents must decide whether they will abort the child. In the case of some extreme disorders, like Tay-Sachs, the parents may have little question. Other disorders may require a more difficult decision. For example, a mongoloid child may live and enjoy many years.

Ultrasound scanning serves several purposes. This technique uses the echoes of high-frequency, undetectable sound waves to project an outline of the developing baby on a screen. The outline of the head can be measured, and the exact age of the fetus can be learned. It is also possible to determine the number of fetuses and the placement of the placenta. Ultrasound scanning is considered safe at present, though unnecessary ultrasonic scanning is discouraged. Tests of the mother's blood and urine indicate whether hormone levels are rising appropriately. Although these levels depend on many factors, they do give some indication of fetal progress. Measure of fetal heartbeat can be made throughout pregnancy and provide additional information.

BIRTH DEFECTS

Birth or congenital defects are those present at birth for a variety of reasons. Identifiable malformations occur in two or three of every one hundred newborn babies, and more frequently in boys than in girls. Not all defects are anatomical. Some are biochemical and some are not immediately detectable. Thus, 6 to 7 percent of all one-year-old children are identified as having birth defects.

There are many kinds of birth defects. Malformations during gestation result in cleft lip, cleft palate, hare lip, spinal malformations, club foot, dislocation of the hip, and heart malformations. Often these conditions can be corrected by surgery. Hereditary disorders include hemophilia and Tay-Sachs disease. Birth injuries result in head trauma and poor oxygen supply that can have long-term consequences. Let us look at the long-term effects of two birth problems—anoxia or lack of oxygen and prematurity.

Lack of oxygen during the birth process can result in brain damage, motor problems, or possibly death. Anoxia can occur because of problems with the umbilical cord during birth or if the baby does not breathe immediately after it leaves the mother's body. One of the most thorough studies[10] of the effects of anoxia at birth followed children for seven years and compared them with a control sample of children who did not experience anoxia. Assessments at birth, at three years, and at seven years revealed changes in the effects of anoxia as the children grew older.

Initially the effects seem to be primarily sensory and motor, then intellectual, and then social and psychological. At birth, anoxic children tend to be irritable, muscularly tense, sensitive to pain and visual stimuli, and to have disrupted motor functioning. At age three, they exhibit some intellectual deficit—their vocabularies are small and their ability to form concepts is impaired. There are more neurological deviations in anoxic children and they are more distractible than the average three-year-old, but now they have few perceptual-motor problems. At age seven, the intellectual difficulties of anoxic children are less salient, but they are likely to have psychological problems—to be socially immature, distractible, and somewhat more dependent.

It is possible that parents respond to the initial motor and intellectual difficulties of an anoxic infant in ways that increase the psychological pressures on the child. Sensitive caretaking can help the child compensate for these deficits, particularly when parents are aware that the problems change with age.

Research[11] following premature children for five years indicates, too, that the quality of the caretaking influences the later effects of prematurity. When parents are supportive and stimulating, there are minimal differences between premature children and their controls. When there is little stimulation, prematurity is associated with many problems.

Birth complications may make initial care more difficult, but sustaining, supportive, attentive child care can help to overcome these early deficits. The child who suffers both reproductive casualty (such as malformations) and care-taking casualty (lack of stimulation and attention) suffers most. Parents cannot always reverse the physical effects of birth defects, but they can provide the attention and support that minimizes the effects of these problems.

PREGNANCY

It is convenient to think of pregnancy as three periods of three months each—as three trimesters. Let's look at the baby's growth and development, the changes in the mother, and the parents' psychological reactions during each of these periods.

First trimester

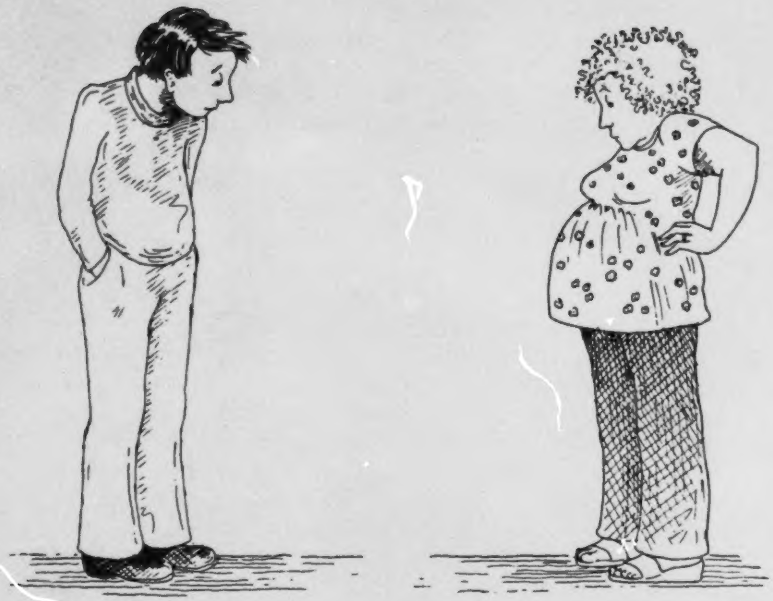
The union of the sperm and the egg occurs in the fallopian tube. The fertilized egg moves down to the uterus, increasing in number of cells, and at the end of the first week implants itself in the spongy inner wall of the uterus. The death rate among human beings is highest in the week before and after implantation.

In the first eight weeks of life, all the major organs of the body begin to develop. The heart beats from the fourth week on, and the brain and nervous system send out impulses. Sex organs begin to develop and the sex of the child is visible. Facial features—eyes, ears, nose, lips, tongue, and even the beginnings of milk teeth—are present.

By the end of twelve weeks, the baby has a well-formed body and is active, even though the mother will not feel the movements for several more weeks. The baby's repertoire of behaviors is impressive, considering that she weighs only one ounce. She can kick, turn her head, curl and fan the toes, make a fist, open and close her mouth, swallow amniotic fluid, and then excrete it.

During this three-month period, the woman's body adjusts to the presence of the fetus. The hormone levels in her body change and breasts may swell. She may have early morning nausea; she may develop a ravenous appetite; she may feel more tired than usual and want frequent naps. She may have less energy than before she became pregnant, feel more emotional, cry more easily, and crave certain foods. As these changes occur, some women experience a strong sense of and unity with the natural processes of life, and an increased awareness of their bodies and their femininity. A woman whose pregnancy is unexpected and unwanted, who already has all the children she wants or who has a career she values may, especially during this time, feel that the child she is carrying is an intruder.

During pregnancy the father begins to get a sense of what it is like to share his wife with a newcomer. In the first months, while the mother is preoccupied with all



the physical changes taking place in her body, the father looks ahead to their growing responsibilities and both parents plan how family resources will provide for the new member.

A study[12] of expectant fathers' changes in self-concept and in relationships to their wives and social world found three natural groupings: (1) romantically-oriented fathers, (2) family-oriented fathers, and (3) career-oriented fathers. The romantically-oriented men were in awe of the whole process of pregnancy. They were more aware of their responsibilities as husbands and fathers during the months of pregnancy than they had been before, and more aware of the differences between being a teen-ager and being an adult. Family-oriented fathers accepted their new responsibilities and were eager to be fathers and family men. Pregnancy brought them closer to their wives. Also, they began to experience fatherhood before birth, in the early months of pregnancy. These men reported that they were drawn to children. One man commented that fatherhood was something that grew on him. Career-oriented fathers saw fatherhood as a chore, a burden that diminished their freedom and interfered with their careers. These men tried to ward off any change in their identities, insisting that they could be good fathers without making any changes in their behavior.

The emotional experiences of the wife and husband may differ in ways that make it difficult for them to be supportive of each other. In the first trimester, many women are involved with their changing bodies. Especially during her first pregnancy, a woman may feel insecure about her attractiveness and her ability to be a mother, and she may need reassurances from her husband. The husband, especially if he is young and not yet secure financially or in his job, may feel overwhelmed by the increasing responsibilities. He may be less aware of the physical changes his wife experiences because they are not visible to him. Talking over feelings and seeing the differences relieves tension. In families where there is already a child, both parents may take all these changes in stride if the pregnancy has no complications and is wanted. However, in each pregnancy, events may occur that arouse these different kinds of concerns in each parent.

Second trimester

By the end of six months, the baby has grown to fourteen inches in length and weighs about one and three-quarters pounds. Development of the systems laid down in the first trimester continues. The child is more muscular and movements are stronger. Several kinds of movements occur—slow, squirming movements, sharp kicks, and slow, hiccough-like movements that can last fifteen to thirty minutes. The baby establishes a sleep-wake cycle similar to that of a newborn. The child has a favorite position for resting and when awake tumbles and rolls about. Babies can hear noises and a loud noise or music can stimulate a spurt of activity. In the sixth month the baby develops a grip so strong that she can support her weight. This grip is stronger than it is in the newborn, although breast feeding maintains the strong grip for a while after birth.

In the second trimester, the mother has already adjusted to the hormonal changes of pregnancy and is over the discomfort of nausea. As the baby grows, the mother's body changes shape, and she may wonder if her altered appearance makes her less attractive to her husband and to others. Research[13] suggests that women who want and plan children are more likely to view their changing shapes as signs of womanliness and femininity and to enjoy the extra attentions they receive. At this time, the woman is not yet so big as to be uncomfortable. Many women report this period as the most pleasant during pregnancy.

In the fourth or fifth month, the mother has that exciting moment called quickening, when she can first feel the baby's movements. Some women describe these as similar to the fluttering of a butterfly or the gentle strokings of a soft glove. Mothers begin to turn their attention to the developing child and begin to form an attachment. Many women report talking to the baby and calling the baby pet names based on the movements and activity cycle. The mothers may develop fantasies about the baby, worry about the health of the child, and wonder who the child will resemble. As she focuses on the child, she withdraws energy from the outside world and from day-to-day events. Many women are preoccupied and yet serene as they think about the child.

If this is a first child, the father may be unprepared for the mother's remoteness just as he is becoming involved in the physical aspects of the pregnancy. The woman's changing shape reminds the husband of the physical changes that were not visible in the first trimester. And the father is likely to be excited when he feels the baby's movements by placing his hands on the mother's abdomen, sometimes seeing the abdomen move as the baby gives a sharp kick. The father, too, is forming an attachment, but it may not be as strong as the mother's because he does not experience the same internal physical sensations. Also, he may be jealous and annoyed at the changes the unseen baby brings to family life. The husband must share his wife's attentions with this newcomer, whether it is their first child or their fifth.

Third trimester

In this period, the baby gains weight and makes final preparations for birth. By the seventh month the baby is sufficiently developed so that she will live if born prematurely and cared for with modern equipment. In the last three months the child gains five pounds or more and receives substances to immunize her against many diseases. From the mother's blood come antibodies that protect the child against all the diseases the mother has had. From the placenta comes gamma globulin to fight other diseases.

As the baby takes up more room in the uterus, there is less space for large movements. Much activity is spent practicing reflexes that will be used after birth—breathing and sucking, especially. The child sucks her thumb and breathes. Although fluid is taken in with the breath, this is not a problem because it is excreted. The infant receives oxygen from the mother's blood supply. As we noted, the child can hear, and is also able to make eye movements. We do not know what the child sees before birth, although we do know that some light penetrates the womb.

Shortly before birth, the child drops down into position for the birth process. Usually the head rests against the cervix, but sometimes it is the buttocks that are in this position. The baby is ready for birth.

Just as the baby is preparing for birth, the parents spend the last trimester preparing for the baby's arrival. If this is a first child, parents get furniture and clothes and arrange space for the child. This is an exciting time as parents work together to create a nest. The father may paint and make things while the mother does work that is less demanding physically. Many women practice maternal behaviors on their husbands, babying them a little. At the same time, many mothers want to be looked after and cared for during these last weeks of pregnancy. Myra Leifer,[14] who studied pregnant women, speculates that during this time the woman is practicing both the mother's and child's behavior. The mother's desire to be cared for may be intensified by her worries about her own health and safety in the delivery. Up until the last trimester, the baby's well-being has been the major focus. Now the mother becomes concerned about herself as well.

In this last trimester, particularly, parents who are having a first child will get a taste of the limitations a baby will bring. The mother may feel less inclined to go out socially because she is big and heavy and has less energy. She cannot sleep easily and the frequency of sexual relations may decrease.

This is also the time when parents select a pediatrician. T. Berry Brazelton,[15] who is a pediatrician, makes some specific recommendations. Find out as much as possible about the pediatrician you are considering. The county medical society, the hospital with which the doctor is affiliated, and perhaps a local medical school can provide information about the pediatrician's medical competence and whether he can care for the baby at the hospital where the child is to be delivered. Then consider this doctor's personal qualities. Are you comfortable with him? Is he open with you? Is he willing and able to answer questions? Is he warm? Does he like children? Talk to mothers whose children are cared for by this pediatrician, to see how the practice is run, who cares for children when the doctor is away or emergencies arise, and whether care is available only during office hours or at other times as well. Visit the doctor in his office before your baby is due. If you are not comfortable with him, you will have a chance to find another doctor. If you decide you want this doctor to care for your child, an office visit before the birth gives you an opportunity to get to know each other before you meet in the delivery room.

The parents' confidence in the doctor is an essential ingredient of a good parent-doctor relationship and of a good child-doctor relationship. Parents communicate their trust in the doctor to the child, who is less fearful and anxious. Parents, particularly mothers, must have confidence in themselves when talking to the doctor. They need to state their worries, concerns, and views openly. Some doctors are aware that the parent-doctor relationship is awkward but some do not take time to help parents feel at ease. Brazelton urges parents to present their feelings and reactions clearly and to be sure that the doctor listens to them.

In the third trimester, both parents may be attending childbirth classes together. As parents prepare for the arrival of the child, they may debate whether to have a home or hospital delivery. Although this choice is often made early and is a factor in selecting a doctor, parents may wait until the last trimester and make the final decision on the basis of the mother's and child's progress during the pregnancy. When making this decision, parents should be aware that most babies throughout human history have been delivered at home. Two discoveries made in the 1840s and 1850s led to more women having hospital deliveries. First, germs were discovered to cause infections and increase maternal mortality, so that a relatively germ-free atmosphere was seen as desirable. Second, the development of anesthesia led to the possibility of pain-free delivery in a hospital setting. However, although delivery in the sterile, stainless steel hospital atmosphere is considered safer for mother and child, the warmth and family support that are part of home are also important. Many parents object to having a natural process—childbirth—treated as an illness that requires medical intervention. Adequate childbirth preparation can eliminate the need for medication.

Although many parents want to have their children delivered at home, most obstetricians recommend against home birth. They explain that when complications do arise, there is little time to get the technical and professional help needed. When this happens, both mother and child may suffer damage that could have been averted if both were in the hospital. Statistics[16] in New York State from 1973 to 1976 reveal that the death rate of infants at birth was 37 per thousand in home deliveries compared to 11 per thousand in hospital deliveries.

Childbirth classes Childbirth classes provide information about pregnancy, labor, delivery, hospital procedures, medications for pain, postpartum care of child and mother, and breastfeeding. The earliest proponent of such preparation, in the 1930s, was Grantly Dick-Read,[17] an English physician who believed that childbirth could be free of pain, discomfort, medication and forceps if mothers had no fear. To reduce fear, he provided each patient with information about childbirth, gave her relaxing exercises to practice, and served as coach for the mother during delivery. He used the term "natural childbirth" to refer to this process. Robert Bradley,[18] who practices in the United States, also emphasizes natural childbirth. He is opposed to the mother having any medication during pregnancy, and so strongly disapproves of medication during childbirth that instructors who teach the Bradley system must demonstrate for certification that 90 percent of their students have medication-free deliveries.

Unlike Dick-Read, Bradley considers the father an important part of the childbirth experience. Bradley believes that the father's participation is essential to a satisfying birth experience, and he describes warmly the joy and caring fathers bring to the experience. The phrase "husband-coached childbirth," which Bradley uses to describe his method, underscores the father's role. Bradley likens the role of doctor during delivery to that of a life guard at a pool. The doctor is to stand on the sidelines and let both parents do the work, unless some unusual problem develops. Bradley's aim is joyful delivery, with the mother able to walk back to her room with her baby and husband. After a first nursing and a few hours' observation to be sure uterine bleeding is controlled, the mother and baby may go home.

In addition to providing factual information and breathing techniques, Bradley suggests relaxation techniques and visual imagery of pleasant events and experiences to further relax the mother during labor. Preparation is begun in the pregnancy, and the amount of training required depends on the particular mother and her physical condition. Although Bradley does not give medications and believes the role of doctor is a minimal one, he does believe babies should be born in hospitals in case there is a sudden difficulty and a Caesarean section is required. However, he does recommend that the hospital provide a cozy, home-like atmosphere for delivery.

Fernand Lamaze, a French obstetrician, studied Russian methods of childbearing and combined conditioning principles with hypnotic techniques to help mothers have satisfying births. Marjorie Karmel,[19] an enthusiastic mother, introduced his work to this country in a book, *Thank You, Dr. Lamaze.* The Lamaze method is sometimes called a psychoprophylactic method (meaning psychological and physical preparation of instruction and practice). In contrast to Dick-Read and Bradley, Lamaze believes natural childbirth can involve pain and discomfort and that the mother must be trained and must work to handle the birth. Mothers learn to concentrate, to breathe properly, and to have confidence in their ability to deliver the child. Elizabeth Bing,[20] a Lamaze teacher in the United States, likens the mother's role to that of a swimmer riding ocean waves in the surf. In the beginning the swimmer may be knocked over and tossed about by the waves, but with experience and some training she learns to ride them buoyantly. *Training and* preparation begin in the last trimester, so the mother does not become bored with the exercises.

Even before Bradley, Lamaze encouraged the presence of the father in the labor and delivery rooms, to coach the mother, help her with her breathing, massage her, and give her support and confidence. Although the method stresses a natural birth, and an active role for the mother in achieving this, Lamaze is not as opposed to medication as is Bradley.

Sheila Kitzinger,[21] a British anthropologist and mother, has drawn on the work of Dick-Read and Lamaze and combined it with body exercises stressing physical fitness. She emphasizes breathing and relaxation and introduces "touch-relaxation," a series of special exercises that lead to increased relaxation. Kitzinger views childbirth as one event in a woman's ongoing sexual life. Her emphasis on childbirth as a part of sexuality leads to her method being described as psychosexual.

The most recent addition to childbirth methods is Esther Marilus' style of natural childbirth.[22] Believing that each labor and delivery is unique and requires different techniques, she combines the exercises and breathing methods of all other schools and introduces one of her own—"graduated breathing." The main advantage of graduated breathing is that the mother gets large amounts of oxygen slowly, so that she does not experience the dizziness and tingling that sometimes occur with a rapid intake of large quantities of oxygen.

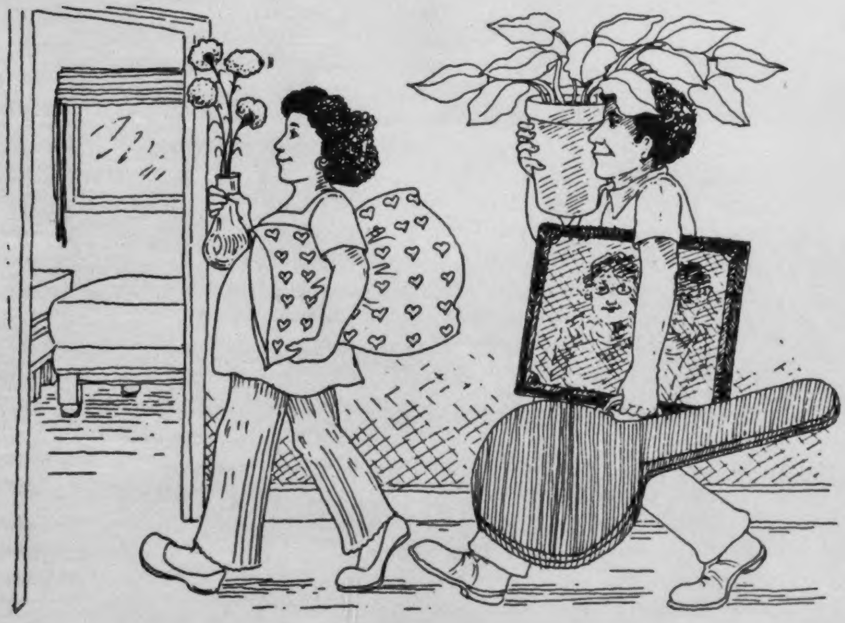
Marilus stresses that exercises are preparation not only for birth but for the entire pregnancy and postpartum period. She suggests that mothers begin, in the first trimester, with exercises for general fitness and relaxation techniques. In the second trimester, mothers learn the different breathing methods for labor, and in the third trimester, they learn to push. Marilus thinks that many mothers who have never been physically active may learn, for the first time in pregnancy, the psychological and physical benefits of a relaxed and well-exercised body, and that they may be motivated to continue long after delivery.

Hypnosis and acupuncture also have been used to reduce pain in childbirth. All other techniques incorporate methods for inducing a light trance. They add education for childbirth, but all rely on relaxation, concentration, and self-suggestion. Acupuncture is used when local anesthesia is desired. Thus, the acupuncturist works with the obstetrician during delivery. As yet, few obstetricians have become interested in this method.

Parents may find themselves drawn to one particular method, but all share some common features: (1) factual information about the childbirth process, (2) physical exercises to tone the body for the work of childbirth, (3) breathing and relaxation exercises to remove tension and facilitate the birth process, and (4) inclusion of the husband or friend as coach. Many childbirth classes for women combine one or more of these methods. In selecting a childbirth class, authors of *Our Bodies Ourselves*[23] recommend (1) a small class with ten or fewer couples if possible, (2) a class that lasts perhaps eight or ten weeks, so there is plenty of time to learn the exercises and practice them, (3) inclusion of father or friend, (4[illegible]scussions of feelings and attitudes about childbirth as well as about techniques, (5) a well-qualified instructor who provides references and describes her personal and professional experiences with birth, (6) availability of psychological professionals with whom to discuss feelings, (7) a reasonable fee, and (8) a reputable sponsoring organization.

Research[24] findings suggest that preparation does not shorten the labor, reduce blood flow or tearing, but that it does heighten the mother's enjoyment of the experience of the childbirth. Women who have taken childbirth classes report feeling in greater control of what was happening. They were excited and report feelings of greater closeness with the child. Thus, preparation heightens the mother's pleasure and satisfaction. Even when there has been little training, some effects are noticeable.

Alternative birth centers Although most obstetricians recommend hospital deliveries, many suggest changes in hospital routines to create a more home-like atmosphere. Alternative birth centers are found in the hospital setting where advanced equipment and professional intervention are quickly at hand. Yet the birthing room, usually used both for labor and delivery, resembles a bedroom and has a large double bed and the kind of furniture you would find in a home. Family members are present; music and food are available. Parents can bring pillows, pictures, and other personal possessions to make a home at the hospital.



Rooming-in Giving mother and child an opportunity to get to know each other in the hospital greatly eases the transition of bringing a baby home. Rooming-in permits mother and child to stay in the same room for extended periods of time. Different hospitals have different arrangements, and often parents can decide how much time during the day the baby is with them. The mother cares for the child, nursing, changing diapers, bathing the baby. Nurses or other professionals are available to answer any questions she has. Some mothers prefer to have their infants with them during the day but in the nursery at night, so they can get as much rest as possible. Other mothers prefer to begin the routine of total care while they are in the hospital, and they want their babies with them twenty-four hours a day. Marshall Klaus and John Kennell[25] found that just five hours of contact each day, instead of the usual hospital routine of seeing the baby for feeding only, made a difference in the quality of the mother-child relationship for several years.

Dreams As parents go through childbirth classes, select a pediatrician, decide whether they want a home birth, and look forward to the delivery, they often have dreams centering on the birth experience. Particularly in the third trimester, women may dream of deformed babies or of animal babies. Mothers may worry when they have such dreams. Yet a study[26] of the content of women's dreams during the last trimester revealed that those women who had the largest percentage of dreams reflecting anxiety had shorter labors than women whose dreams reflected less anxiety. The investigators speculated that women who expressed anxiety in dreams got the feelings out of their systems, and so were more relaxed and had faster deliveries.

LABOR AND DELIVERY

The experience of being born is one of the most stressful in any individual's life. There is (1) a change from placental supply of oxygen to breathing with the lungs, (2) an extreme change in the environment, from a watery state to an oxygen atmosphere, (3) a temperature change from about 98° in the uterus to about 70° in the delivery room, (4) the appearance of strong light after months of darkness, and (5) the beginning of functioning of organs like the stomach, intestines, and hormonal system. The ability to survive these stresses depends on the health of the mother before and during pregnancy and on the health of the fetus at birth.

Labor is divided into three stages: (1) dilation or opening of the cervix, (2) expulsion of the infant, and (3) expulsion of the placenta. Labor may begin with contractions that come every fifteen or twenty minutes and last about 25 to 35 seconds. However, in a small number of cases, it begins with the rupture of the anmiotic sac, and a rush of fluid, with the contractions starting later. The uterus becomes narrow, thus straightening the baby's body and pressing the head or buttocks against the cervix. Muscles of the uterus contract and apply a force equal to about fifty-five pounds on the baby. The baby's head (or bottom) pushes against the cervix, flattens it, and forces it open. When the cervix is fully dilated to ten centimeters (or five fingers) in width, the first stage of labor ends. The average length of the first stage varies; in first births it is about eight hours, and in later births about six hours.

The second stage of labor begins when the child moves into the birth canal. The baby's head has soft places, and so the head can mold to go through the narrow passage. The mother pushes to move the baby down. As the baby's head reaches the vaginal opening, it stretches the skin. To prevent tearing of the skin from the vagina to the anus as the baby emerges, an incision, termed an episiotomy, is often made between the vagina and anus, and is stitched after birth.

The doctor helps the baby emerge from the canal and sucks out any fluid in the mouth. If the child does not cry spontaneously, the doctor can stroke the back or spank the bottom in order to stimulate a cry and the first breath. Frederick Leboyer,[27] a French obstetrician, has urged that the birth process should be gentle and that the first minutes of the baby's life should occur in a soothing environment. He recommends subdued lighting and a minimum amount of noise in the delivery room, skin contact with the mother, not cutting the umbilical cord for a few minutes after birth, and a warm, soothing bath, similar to the intrauterine environment, for the newborn. Although some of Leboyer's ideas—especially the warm bath, are controversial, many of his recommendations for a gentler birth have been adopted in modified forms.

When the infant emerges, he or she is placed on the mother's stomach and the umbilical cord is cut. In the third stage of labor, uterine contractions separate the placenta from the lining of the uterus and the placenta is expelled. Further uterine contractions decrease the bleeding.

The amount of medication a mother receives for pain during the birth process varies. With preparation, some women require little or none. However, many women experience moderate to severe discomfort at some time during the birth. If the infant is born buttocks first (breech birth) or if the mother is delivering twins, pain medication may be strongly advised. Several options exist, and the major consideration is the effect of the medication on the child. Large doses of central nervous system drugs, like general anesthetics, may interfere with the baby's breathing. Other medications, like brief inhalations of nitrous oxide (laughing gas) or nerve blocks, provide pain relief with minimal effects on the child. Nerve blocks (anesthetics injected directly into the spine or the area next to it to deaden the nerves experiencing the pain) may interfere with the mother's ability to push the child and so necessitate the use of forceps (metal instruments) to extract the child from the birth canal.

Complications

Doctors and nurses assisting at labor are concerned not only with the survival and delivery of the child, but with survival of the child's capacity for normal life. Sometimes they must intervene in the natural process of labor and delivery, to induce the birth, monitor the child's progress with electronic equipment, or perform a Caesarean section.

Several kinds of problems can produce complications. The contractions may be too weak or too strong. The child may be poorly positioned in the uterus, with the head at a poor angle or the buttocks toward the cervix. The mother's pelvis may be poorly shaped for delivering the size child she has. The placenta may be poorly positioned and deliver first, depriving the child of oxygen. The mother may have chronic health problems that increase the risk for her and the child, or she may be delivering more than one baby.

Induction Labor may have to be started by artificial means because the child and the mother will be in danger if pregnancy continues. The mother's blood pressure may be too high, or the child may be postmature (may have been in the uterus more than 42 or 43 weeks) and have outlived the food supplies in the uterus and the mother's ability to supply oxygen.

The cervix is checked to see how much stimulation is required, and hormones such as oxytocin or prostaglandins are administered to trigger the labor. In some cases, the membranes are ruptured to start the process. Many mothers report that the contractions from induced labor are more variable in timing and intensity, and sometimes make prepared childbirth more difficult.

Fetal monitoring Although sometimes used in normal deliveries, electronic fetal monitoring is more often used when there are problems, to assess the baby's health during labor. Electronic monitors are of two kinds. First, ultrasonic sound echoes, which emanate from a small unit attached to the mother's abdomen, report fetal heartbeats without internal examination. This unit can be used before the rupture of the membranes and dilation of the cervix. A second unit is used to measure uterine contractions. Another method requires that the monitor be attached to the top of the baby's head. It is inserted in the uterus after the membranes are ruptured and contact with the head is possible. Fetal blood obtained from a sample from the scalp may also be used to check on the amount of oxygen in the child's blood.

Caesarean section The doctor may recommend that a baby be delivered by Caesarean section when any of the complications listed above occurs or if the mother had genital herpes simplex, which can infect the baby as it passes through the birth canal. Caesarean section is surgical removal of the child through an incision made in the uterus and abdominal cavity of the mother. With the use of nerve blocks, a mother can be given local anesthesia and still be conscious for the birth of her child. Once a mother has had Caesarean section, her subsequent children will probably be delivered this way to reduce the risk of uterine rupture at the point of the incision.

The arrival

The arrival of the baby is the climax of the birth process. Smiling and excited at the miracle of birth, parents eagerly look at the baby, often seeing resemblances between the child and other family members. Bradley describes the laughter that often bubbles up in parents when the birth has been a satisfying experience for both. Many parents are enthralled at the tinyness of the child and the diminutiveness of the hands, feet, body. Other parents are surprised. We assume a newborn will look like a seven-month old child, round, smiling, head held steadily. Instead, the baby, on average weighing seven pounds and measuring twenty inches, is smaller and reddened, covered with a cheese-like substance (vernix caseosa) which protects the baby in the uterus from the effects of living in a fluid environment. Soon after birth the substance begins to disappear, leaving a velvety coating to the skin. The head is very large in relation to the body, and the baby cannot support it. The head may be misshapen and bruised from the delivery process, especially if forceps were used to pull the baby out of the birth canal.

An adult can hold a newborn easily on his or her forearm, cradling the head in one hand. Immediately following birth, at one and five minutes, and then again at one hour, the baby is rated on five dimensions of behavior by someone other than the obstetrician. The evaluation, devised by Apgar and named for her, rates five areas: (1) *appearance* or color of skin, (2) *pulse* as a measure of heart rate, (3) *grimace and gag reflexes* to measure reflex irritability, (4) *activity* to measure muscle tone, and (5) *respiration*. Each area is rated 0, 1, or 2; if the child receives a total score of 8 to 10, he or she is healthy; if the total score is 0, 1, or 2, resuscitation is required.

Bonding

The first meeting between parents and child is an important occasion. In the first hour after birth, babies are more alert and visually attentive than they will be for the next three or four hours. And during that first hour they may be most responsive to contact with the parents. Pediatricians Marshall Klaus and John Kennell[28] believe the first hour is a sensitive period during which parents need privacy and close physical contact with the infant. This first chance to touch, hold, and explore the baby and to receive some response from the child in the form of eye or body movements is very important. Continuing contact with the baby, for at least five hours per day in the hospital also is important. The close physical contact is thought to strengthen the attachment between parent and child and is termed bonding.

The evidence for the importance of this early contact comes from several studies.[29] The first study of bonding behavior found that mothers who had extra contact with their babies (one hour after birth and five hours per day for the next three days) also had more eye-to-eye contact while nursing and soothed and cuddled their babies more than mothers who had not had extra contact and saw their babies only at four-hour intevals for a 20 to 30 minute period of feeding. When the "bonded" children were two years old, their mothers were more verbal than the other group of mothers—gave fewer orders, asked more questions, used more words. When the children were five, they had significantly higher IQs and were more advanced in language.

In addition to forming a bond, the extra contact between parents and child in the hospital permits parents to learn how the baby reacts and how to care for the child's needs. When parents and baby go home, both parents feel more at ease when handling the infant.

Klaus and Kennell believe all hospitals can modify procedures to provide time for the bonding process. Even if a child is premature or needs special care, they believe it is often possible for the parents to hold the child briefly before the child goes to the intensive care nursery. And parents can go to the nursery and give as much physical care as possible during the child's stay there.

Research[30] suggests that when parents and child are separated because of the child's needs for special care, the mother lacks confidence with the child during the first few months at home. The mother is less socially interactive, looking at the child less and smiling less. However, at about four months, these differences disappear in middle-class homes. Although stresses and strains accompany parent–child separation at birth, the effects of the separation diminish with time in a supportive environment. Thus, parents who adopt a child or who are separated from their own child for weeks are assured that a strong, healthy relationship can, and usually does, develop even without the immediate contact.

SUMMARY

This chapter has described the changes that occur in mother, father, and baby as a new life grows within the mother. The very rapid growth of the child during the pregnancy and the child's vulnerability make it imperative for the mother to pursue a healthy life style with a nourishing diet, adequate exercise, and freedom from excessive stress. Competent, careful, and caring medical supervision throughout the pregnancy is essential to insure a healthy delivery for mother and child.

The parents' psychological reactions to the pregnancy, the pleasures and worries and strains, the different rhythms that men's and women's reactions may follow have been described. The many steps of preparation for welcoming the new life are detailed. The active participation of both parents in helping to bring the child into the world has been stressed. Different kinds of childbirth preparation have been reviewed, along with the effects such preparation has on the delivery experience of all family members.

The chapter has described the importance of the delivery and birth experience for the parents' growing attachment to the child and for the child's continuing development. We have noted that immediate physical contact between parent and child strengthens the bond, and continuing contact in the hospital increases parents' feelings of ease and confidence in caring for the child when they go home.

While the focus in this chapter has been on healthy pregnancy and delivery and on the means of insuring such an experience for parents and child, we have also discussed possible complications, birth defects, and ways of detecting and preventing them. We have also noted that when problems occur and affect the child, skilled caretaking following the birth can maximize the child's development.

ADDITIONAL READING

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6

The first year of life

In this chapter we examine development during the first year of life and parenting procedures that handle problems and contribute to optimal development. We look at what the newborn can do and at the physical, intellectual, language, social, and emotional development that occurs during the first year.

THE NEWBORN

During the first days of life, the infant's states of consciousness are different from the clearly defined states of being asleep or awake exhibited by older children and adults. Peter Wolff[1] has identified six stages of consciousness in infants: (1) *regular sleep,* in which the child is relaxed and still; (2) *irregular sleep,* in which the eyes are closed but the child is somewhat active; (3) *drowsiness,* in which the eyes flutter and the child has a glazed look; (4) *alert inactivity,* in which the eyes are open and the child is alert; (5) *waking activity,* in which the child is alert and physically active; and (6) *crying,* in which the child cries and moves about.

Babies vary in how much time they spend in each activity. The average newborn spends sixteen hours each day sleeping, though some sleep as little as ten hours, and others sleep as much as twenty hours a day. Babies spend at least 50 percent of sleep time having rapid eye movements (REM), a pattern of sleep that in adults is associated with dreaming. Babies can drift into REM sleep from any previous state including crying. Adults proceed to a dreaming state after a period of deep sleep. We do not know whether babies dream. Researchers[2] speculate that the large percentage of rapid eye movement sleep serves as internal stimulation to promote development of higher brain centers. Premature babies spend even more time than full-term infants in REM sleep. Percentages of REM sleep decrease during the first six months, but it is not until the child is five years old that the proportion of REM sleep drops to the adult average of 20 percent.

Reflexes

The newborn is equipped with a variety of reflexes, defined as inborn responses triggered by specific stimuli. Some reflexes, like sucking, are present and well practiced before birth. All reflexes appear to help the newborn adapt to the new and different environment outside of the mother, so that the baby can function effectively during this critical period. The tonic-neck reflex (turning the head to the side), the rooting reflex (searching for breast), and the sucking reflex provide mechanisms for taking in nourishment. The blinking, gagging, and withdrawal reflexes protect the baby from external stimuli that are annoying or harmful.

The righting reflex maintains posture. The Moro reflex occurs whenever the baby loses support of head or body or is startled by a loud noise or some other surprise. The infant extends her arms and then throws them across her chest, as though embracing someone or something. This reflex may have survived from the days when mothers carried their babies as they went about their work.

Senses

For years psychologists thought newborn babies were incompetent creatures who were unable to comprehend the world around them. Because infants cannot tell us what they see, hear, taste, smell, and feel, our understanding of the newborn's abilities was limited until complex equipment enabled us to detect baby's physiological responses to what they sense. As we learn about their abilities, we are more and more impressed with the competent behavior displayed by babies just a few hours old.

Newborns are sensitive to light and to changes in brightness immediately after birth. They can distinguish objects and follow an object that is moved in an arc, although they see things in a hazy blur, rather than as clear images. A newborn sees most clearly what is about eight inches from his face, and this is often the mother's or father's face. The great majority of children can track an object within forty-eight hours of birth, especially if they are cuddled in an adult's arms. Babies are more interested in patterned objects—for example, faces or concentric circles—rather than solid-colored circles. However, they tend to focus on the edges, perhaps because that is where contrast is sharpest. This may disconcert the new mother, who wants her baby to look at her eyes, not at her forehead or chin. But within a few weeks the child will make eye contact. By the age of six months, the child's vision is similar to that of the adult.

Newborns develop an awareness of space in the first week of life. If a baby sees a moving object approaching on a collision course, he will defend himself against the object by turning his head or pulling away as much as possible. This response does not depend on the size of the object—babies defend themselves only when objects are close to their faces, no matter how big or small the objects are. If an object is not on a collision course, the baby does not attempt to defend himself.

Hearing is difficult to assess immediately after birth, because there may be fluid in the ears. But tests done a few hours later suggest that babies can tell the difference between sounds of different pitch, loudness, and duration. Studies[3] suggest that babies sleep and eat better when they hear rhythmic sounds reminiscent of the heart beat—a metronome, for example. In some experimental settings, alert infants have been found to have hearing abilities similar to those of adults. Babies are most sensitive to the human voice and to sounds in the voice range.[4] Babies a few days old will respond differently to various odors, although it is not clear whether the odors are pleasant or unpleasant to the infants. We do not know whether they are aware of tastes.

Babies not only are able to sense much that goes on around them, but they quickly learn to use sensory stimuli to get rewards. For example, babies a few hours old learn to turn their head to the right for a sweet substance when a tone sounds, but turn it to the left for a reward when they hear a click. They can quickly learn to reverse these responses for rewards, thus demonstrating flexibility in learning.

Social responses

The newborn is not as isolated and self-centered as so often described by psychologists. Research[5] suggests that babies respond to human beings. As already mentioned, they prefer to look at patterned figures like faces in the earliest days. A one-day-old infant cries empathetically in response to another baby's cry, but not to a synthetic cry. When less than a week old, a newborn can imitate an adults' facial expressions. After seeing an adult stick out her tongue, flutter her eyelids, or open and close her mouth, very young babies were observed imitating these movements. This suggests that (1) a newborn has a rudimentary sense of self as a human being capable of imitating a person in front of her, and (2) that she has sufficient motor control to do it.

A fascinating study[6] of the social capacities of newborns reveals that babies move their bodies in rhythm to the meaningful speech of adults. Newborns between twelve hours and twenty-four days were presented with tape recordings of spoken English, isolated vowel sounds, tapping noises, and spoken Chinese, along with an adult speaking in person. The babies moved in harmony with meaningful speech, both live and recorded, but not in response to the tapping or to the meaningless vowel sounds. The babies from the northeast United States could not be expected to understand or in any way be familiar with Chinese. This kind of adult-child interaction, in which the baby responds in a specific way to what the adult does, may be critical to development. If infants are not born with this ability to respond to what the mother does, the mother may become discouraged or depressed and eventually may withdraw from the baby.

At six to ten days, the newborn can recognize the mother by her smell. One study[7] demonstrated that babies turn their heads to breast pads containing their mother's milk. At about two weeks of age, babies will look at their own mothers more frequently than at strangers. When a voice that seems to come from the mother is that of a stranger, the baby will avert her gaze and refuse to look at the "mother" with a strange voice. Thus, very early in life babies have sensory knowledge of the mother.

Parents who are aware of the built-in behaviors and the immediate capacity for learning that help the baby to adapt and flourish in a variety of situations are less likely to be tense and worried about their new responsibility. They can relax and enjoy this new little person—babies are made of sturdy stuff.

Individual differences

From the beginning babies are very distinct individuals. Anneliese Korner[8] studied newborns before their mothers could influence their behavior significantly, and noted differences among infants two to four days of age in: (1) frequency and duration of spontaneous crying, (2) ability to be soothed and comforted by the caretaker, (3) degree of postural adjustment (molding) to the person handling them, (4) amount of spontaneous oral activity, and (5) use of oral activity for comfort. Rudolph Schaffer and Peggy Emerson[9] also noted differences in how much newborns enjoy being held or cuddled. These differences can influence how easily a mother can meet her baby's needs. A baby who cries frequently and will not be soothed or comforted, who stiffens and squirms when held, yet cannot comfort himself by sucking a finger, presents the new mother with problems not felt by the mother of an infant who rarely cries and is easily comforted when he does. The mother of the former infant may feel inadequate as she tries to meet her child's needs; the mother of the latter may develop great confidence in her parenting skills.

Newborns differ in their processing of external stimuli. Some are very sensitive and alert, quickly tracking a visual object or responding to a buzzer. The baby with a low threshold for stimulation can be overwhelmed or overstimulated easily. When handling stimuli, some infants seem able to organize or process them, and respond to them, other babies withdraw.

In their work with 136 children observed from infancy on, Alexander Thomas and Stella Chess[10] clustered babies into three general groups. They talk about the "easy child," the "difficult child," and the "slow to adapt child." T. Berry Brazelton[11] has a similar typology of average baby, active baby, and quiet baby. Easy babies, the largest single group, tend to be regular in behavior and to have predictable eating and sleeping schedules. They have a positive approach to new stimuli, new foods, new experiences; they adapt easily to changes and are in a good humor much of the time. Difficult children, a much smaller group, have irregular eating and sleeping habits. They tend to respond negatively to, and sometimes to withdraw from, new stimuli. Their responses are usually intense, and the babies are often irritable and unhappy. Once they are able to adapt to a new situation, they often function happily. However, in infancy they meet many new situations, and sensitive caretaking can be especially helpful in aiding them to adapt to the world. Babies who require a longer priod of time to adapt to new situations are like difficult children who are slow to feel comfortable with new stimuli, but the responses of the first group are milder. They do not feel as negative about new stimuli as do the difficult infants, and instead of responding intensely they are more likely to withdraw. Although they are slow to warm up, in general parents have an easier time caring for the first group than the second.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

On average, the baby grows from about twenty-one inches at birth to about twenty-eight inches at the end of the year, and birth weight triples. Growth, however, involves more than an increase in size and weight—it includes increasing organization of behavior.

Growth proceeds according to three general principles. First, the direction of growth is from head to foot. Development occurs first in the head and neck area. Sight and hearing continue to develop, and gradually the infant becomes able to control the head. Next the baby is able to sit alone and to use arms and hands. And then the child becomes a toddler, learning to use the legs and to walk. Second, the direction of growth is from the center of the body to the extremities. Control of the neck and shoulders occurs before control of hands and fingers. The upper parts of the arms and legs develop before the forearms and forelegs. Third, the direction of growth is from gross activity to more differentiated and organized behaviors. For example, the ability to pick up an object develops in stages. First the child points to the object, then is able to reach for it with an awkward, claw-like, sweeping motion. Gradually the movements become more refined and better organized, so that in the seond year a child can pick up a pellet with the thumb and forefinger.

Newborn babies lie on their backs or stomachs with the head turned to one side. They can support their heads only for brief moments when they lie on their stomachs. Their hands, which will soon be more active, are clenched in fists most of the time. Gradually, in the first weeks, they learn to shift position so they lie on their backs in what is called the midline position—the head faces straight ahead and the hands are brought to the center of the body. Their hands are open, and they play with the fingers, occasionally kicking their legs.

By the second month, babies are able to take a swipe at objects with either hand, but it is not until about four months that an infant can contact an object. By this time a baby can hold her head steadily and can compensate for body sway without the support of the caretaker's hand. At five to six months, babies can sit with support, and they can begin to grasp objects efficiently. By eight to ten months, most can sit alone, and now both hands are free to explore and to manipulate. Coordination has improved—at this age a baby can grasp and hold a cube. Next comes control of the trunk, which leads to creeping and crawling. They go all over in rapid motion.

As crawling begins, another innate protective device—depth perception—begins to function. In an ingenious study,[12] experimenters built an apparatus they called the visual cliff. A crawling area is arranged with a checkerboard pattern; part of the area is under glass and the pattern appears several feet below. As a baby crawls along the glass, the pattern underneath it appears to be a chasm. Babies avoid the cliff area even when their mothers encourage them to crawl over it. These researchers determined that at one and one-half months babies have enough depth perception so that they become upset when placed on the deep side of the visual cliff.

Most babies stand and then walk while holding on to objects for support. This activity usually continues for some time before they can walk. Between twelve and eighteen months, walking replaces crawling. There are enormous individual differences in the ages at which children first walk. Some one-year-olds have been walking for weeks, and some will be far from taking their first steps.

The baby who is provided with a stimulating environment may develop more rapidly than one who is not. If, for example, a mother has her infant practice the stepping reflex (the baby makes stepping movements when held in an upright position with the the foot touching a surface), that baby may walk sooner than a baby who did not have this. Cross-cultural studies[13] reveal variations in age of walking. Some countries in which children are taller and physically advanced report that children walk on average one month earlier. In our culture, parents have stimulated the motor and muscular development of boys more than that of girls. This practice is changing, as motor skills in women are becoming increasingly valued.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Physical and intellectual development are closely intertwined in the early months and years. To learn about the world, the child must be able to come in contact with it by getting around, exploring objects, and seeing how they work.

Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist, has deepened our understanding of how children's minds grow and develop. He was interested from an early age in how people form their ideas about the world, how they learn what the world is. As a young psychologist giving intelligence tests to French children, he was intrigued with the reasoning processes that led children to give the wrong answers to questions. When his own children were born, he carefully studied their growth from the time of birth, observing their actions in minute detail. He found that action was the prerequisite for knowledge. The child acts on the world and builds up ideas from his or her own actions and the actions of others. Knowledge of the world is not a gradual accumulation of fact after fact. Rather, growth occurs in stages, and each stage is qualitatively different from the others. Thus, babies do not respond and organize the world in the same way that toddlers or older children do, and older children differ from adolescents and adults. Piaget's work has made fundamental contributions to our knowledge of children's intellectual growth. When you are aware of Piaget's stages and periods, you will be better able to understand your children's reasoning and intellectual abilities.

Piaget[14] believes intelligence involves the individual's adaptation to the world in such a way that the person interacts effectively with the environment. Piaget terms both the first and second years the sensori-motor period to emphasize that the child perceives, then acts. Little mental thought intervenes between what is seen or heard and what is done. The *reflexive* stage lasts from birth to the end of the first month. The infant repeats reflexive behaviors and becomes skilled at them. Sucking, for example, becomes smooth and efficient. The infant spends a lot of time looking and scanning the environment. The *primary circular reaction* stage, seen during the second and third months, involves repetition of simple acts for their own sake—sucking, fingering a blanket, opening and closing of the hands. In this stage the infant coordinates an activity while using two senses, for example, vision and hearing—when a baby hears a loud noise, she turns to see what is causing it. And it is during this time that the infant begins to develop a concept of a coherent world.

In the first two stages, the child's own actions are the focus of her attention. She acts—kicks her legs, plays with her fingers—for the sake of the activity, not to accomplish anything. In the remaining stages, activity is directed outward toward the environment. In the third stage, the *secondary circular reaction* stage (from four to eight months), the child repeats an act to observe a change in the environment. The word secondary is used because reactions involve objects in the environment. The baby kicks a mobile to make it go, or reaches to move an object. Each act is not organized with a purpose; rather, the goal is discovered accidentally in the process of activity. In the fourth stage, the *coordination of secondary reactions* (from eight to twelve months) the child uses responses to solve a problem and achieve some goal. For example, in order to get a matchbox, the child brushes away the father's hand, which is an obstacle. The child knows what he or she wants and uses action to get it.

During the first year of life, the infant comes to understand the permanence of objects. This is a major occurrence and is essential to the development of the

concept of a coherent world. The ability of the newborn to remember is very limited. Only gradually does the infant become able to recall an object or person. It is easier for parents to empathize with the crying of a newborn baby when they remember that "Out of sight, out of mind" is almost literally true for infants, who have no sense that anything exists that they cannot see. Because of this, your baby may cry as though her heart is broken, even though you are giving her excellent care. Gradually babies come to realize that objects and people exist even when they cannot be seen.

Piaget's theory emphasizes action in the development of thinking and reasoning powers. He believes babies and children have natural desires to approach the world and interact, to explore and learn. Research on early learning substantiates this belief. Babies enjoy learning for the sake of mastering a task, and as soon as they can do it, they lose interest.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Now let's look at language development. At birth babies can say nothing, but by the end of the first year they have a vocabulary of about three words, and by the end of the second year, they can put two words into a sentence. Language development is most rapid in the years between one and four, but experiences during the first year are crucial to the child's continuing acquisition of verbal skills.

At birth the baby is able to cry, and the mother can distinguish a cry of anger from one of pain or hunger. Babies do not vocalize in the early weeks of life, but they can detect differences in very similar sounds like *p* and *b*. They make noises that are related to eating and mouthing, and in the second month they begin cooing—making light, little noises when they are happy, usually after eating or while looking at smiling faces.

In the fourth or fifth month, babbling begins. Babies repeat syllables, often the same syllable over and over—dadada, mamama. During these months a baby can make all the sounds of all the languages in the world. However, this versatility does not persist. As the baby grows and continues to vocalize, the sounds become more characteristic of the language he hears. A year or so later, he is unable to produce some of the sounds he could make easily at six months. The universality of the babbling sounds, along with the ability to discriminate complex sounds and move rhythmically to spoken language, suggest that babies are preprogrammed to be able to learn any language. Furthermore, the fact that the timetable of vocal events is similar for babies around the world reinforces this notion. Babies in all cultures and countries babble at about four to six months, say their first words at about a year, and combine two words at about two years. The babbling of deaf children indicates that the start of this behavior does not depend on the ability to hear sound. However, deaf babies make fewer different sounds, and they stop vocalizing after about six months. Evidently, babies need to hear sounds and receive vocal stimulation if verbal development is to continue.

Even before babies begin to use words, the sounds they make have inflections that are similar to those of adults. R. Tonkova-Yampol'skaya, a Russian investigator,[15] showed that prior to speech, the sounds babies make have intonations that express happiness, requests, commands, and questions. When a baby first begins to use words, he may use the same word as a statement, a command, or a request. "Mama," for example, can be a question, an order, an endearment, or a plea for help.

Language development in the first year depends on intellectual growth. Babies have to learn that objects and people exist whether they see them or not, that people, things, and events have names that they can use to communicate with others. Babies need to be able to remember words that go with objects, and they need to be able to recall the event they want to name.

The quality of interpersonal relations in the early weeks and months influences language development. Language is a means of communicating reactions and desires to other people, and is, thus, a social process. Babies have to learn that communication is worthwhile—that it results in action. Because an infant's earliest vocal behavior is crying, the kind of parental response to the crying has an effect on language development. Korner[16] reports that newborns who cry a great deal do not respond to the world and other people in it as fully as those who do not cry. Crying decreases other forms of interaction and exploration. Sylvia Bell and Mary Ainsworth[17] report that frequent crying hinders the development of language and other forms of communication. Children who do not cry a lot develop words and gestures more rapidly than children who do.

Language development, then, depends not only on the ability to say words, but on mental and social development as well. Like physical development, language appears to result from preprogrammed, built-in mechanisms. Infants need opportunities to express themselves, verbally and physically. And they need feedback from the environment and people in it, to modify and shape developing language and behavior.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The infant is introduced to the world and what it means to be human by the quality of social experiences in the first year of life. Warm, supportive relationships establish what Erikson describes as a sense of trust in the world which can generalize to other people and the world at large. We discuss here the appearance of the smile, the development of attachment to the parents, the beginning of the self-concept, and the growth of responsiveness to peers. The appearance of the baby's social smile is a major landmark that increases the parents' attachment and responsiveness to their child.

In the first two weeks babies smile when they are comfortable and asleep, perhaps dreaming. These smiles seem automatic—they involve the mouth but not the eyes. By the fifth or sixth week, babies begin to smile at faces or pictures of faces. This smile is what we think of as the social smile—the mouth turns up and the eyes light up, and the baby seems happy. The social smile occurs when babies are forty-six weeks from conception—about six weeks after birth. The parents of premature babies must wait longer before seeing this magical event.

The human face, or parts of it, are the most effective stimuli for triggering smiling. When babies first begin to smile, they will do so in response to anything that remotely resembles a face, even a card with six dots on it. At three months, a face must have eyes and a nose to elicit a smile, and at five to six months the complete face is required.

Babies also smile when they can make something happen—make a mobile move or shake a rattle. John Watson[18] demonstrated that babies a few months old get special pleasure out of behavior that controls an event or elicits a response from someone. Watson suggests that it is not that babies enjoy games because adults play them, but rather that babies enjoy adults because they play games and give babies a chance to be effective.

Parental attachment

Cultural lore, literature, and psychologists have long emphasized the warmth, comfort, security, and trust the child derives from the mother-child attachment. The experience of having needs met in a warm, loving relationship is considered the foundation of development in life. The baby's attachment to the mother begins in the early weeks of infancy, when the baby begins to distinguish her from all other adults. As the infant grows, he becomes active in initiating physical contact and interactions. At about five months, he may give joyful kicks and gurgle and laugh to engage the mother in play. If the mother has been away, the baby will lift his arms or clasp his hands in greeting when the parent returns.

At four to five months, babies show signs of apprehension in the presence of strangers—freezing, lying or sitting still, and barely breathing. At seven to eight months, they show pronounced fear of strangers, sometimes crying as an unknown person approaches. This occurs at about the same time that babies develop an awareness that the mother exists even when she is not with the baby, and this is followed by development of fear of separation from mother and other important persons.

T.G.R. Bower[19] in Scotland has advanced an intriguing notion for the fear of separation. He states that the baby develops a communication system with another person, usually the mother, but sometimes a twin or other adult. A complex, individual style of relating develops, with shared vocalizations, shared gestures. When the mother or other partner leaves, the baby is isolated and alone. No one understands him or her. No one pays attention in the way the preferred partner did, and fear of separation results. The fear is not fear of loss of food, care, or protection, as has been thought, but fear of solitude and loneliness. Bower predicts that if shared communication is the basis of separation anxiety, then such fear should decrease as the child develops speech and is able to communicate with others. Indeed, separation fear does diminish as the communication skills are mastered.

Until recently the mother-child bond was considered the only attachment of importance in infancy. However, as researchers have observed parent-child interactions and attachments in traditional families, they have found that babies become attached to both parents, although most will seek comfort from the mother if distressed. Mothers and fathers do bring different qualities to parent-child relationships.

Several studies[20] show that in home settings, mothers and fathers interact with their infants in different ways. Some researchers found that fathers are more likely to be visually attentive and to be playful in a physically active way. Mothers are more likely to hold the babies during caretaking activities and to verbalize more than fathers. The physical behavior of the baby with the mother is smooth and slow. Fathers more frequently touch their children in short bursts of tapping, tending to stimulate and excite the baby. They also make exaggerated faces at the baby. These differences in parenting behavior appear in the hospital and persist through the first year of life.

For many years psychologists believed that the infant had no early sense of self. Recent research suggests that babies begin to recognize themselves at about six months. They smile, babble, and vocalize happily to their own images in a mirror. However, the self-concept develops gradually. Not until children are about two years of age will they look in a mirror and say their own names. At about the same time a child is able to report that she is a girl or he is a boy.

Peers

Does an infant interact with other children? A recent study[21] indicates babies are positively responsive to children three to four. And infants are responsive to each other and initiate contact in play sessions in the first year of life. In one study[22] a researcher observed nine-month-old babies who played together once a week for ten weeks. They found that the play of the babies became increasingly complex when they were in their own homes and presumably feeling more comfortable. When they played in another baby's home, they tended to be more interested in toys and objects. This lessened interest in peers when away from home may explain why, in the past, psychologists failed to note babies' interest in each other—until recently psychologists have usually observed babies away from home, in laboratories.

Emotions

During the first year of life, an infant experiences many of the basic emotions, including joy, pleasure, pain, and anger. The cries of a newborn can communicate hunger, pain, or distress. And even before an infant smiles in response to another human, the baby can be observed smiling in her sleep, a smile of contentment.

The newborn infant may flail the arms and legs and move the whole body while crying. Such responses occur in reaction to loud noises, loss of physical support, or restraint of the head or other parts of the body. Such a total response is a signal to parents that the baby may need attention quickly. As children develop in the first year, the global negative response becomes differentiated into the emotions of anger and fear. For example, in the second half of the first year a baby, when angry, can cry quietly, the body remaining still. By the end of the first year, anger can be expressed as a general feeling or mood, with little body reaction.

Fear gradually emerges as a specific emotion and is seen clearly in the stranger anxiety and fear of separation that occur in the last quarter of the year. Until they are about six to eight months old, babies are accepting of any adult, friend or stranger. Then they begin to show fear of strangers with a total bodily response of freezing, and soon they will cry when a stranger approaches or the mother leaves. The response of anxiety and fear at this time in the baby's life is natural and appropriate. It will decrease toward the end of the year.

Just exactly the opposite pattern of development is seen in positive emotions like laughter and joy. At birth there are no social smiles or laughter. Social smiling develops somewhere in the second or third months with cooing and chortling following after. At about the fourth month laughter emerges, and it is a spontaneous and active expression of feeling. Infants first laugh at being touched in some way. Later visual and social stimuli evoke laughter. This later laughter is thought to come from the perception that an event or object does not fit an expectation. The poor fit between reality and expectation must occur in a secure setting, or else fear will be aroused.

Laughter and joy are related to active mastery of situations. For example, the infant who succeeds in touching the mobile so that it moves will laugh. Anger, too, may be related to wishes for active mastery that are frustrated by a parent or by some environmental event. For example, an infant will cry if a ball rolls under a table out of reach, or if a toy drops from the high chair and cannot be retrieved. As the child takes a wider interest in the world during the second six months of the first year, curiosity and surprise develop. Surprise occurs when a child has built up an expectation of what might or should happen, but an unexpected event occurs instead. For example, a child may show surprise when a Jack-in-the-Box disappears into the box.

By the end of the first year a baby experiences and expresses anger, joy, anxiety or fear, surprise, and curiosity. The expression of these emotions has developed from a diffuse pattern of discharge to a more controlled one.

Limits

When children begin to crawl, to pull themselves up on tables, chairs, and other furniture, to walk and climb, they need to learn to accept some restrictions. For their own safety, they must learn not to climb too high, not to crawl or walk into dangerous places. A recent study of obedience in infants provides clues for parents in setting limits.

Observing year-old babies' obedience to mothers' commands in the home, Donelda Stayton, Robert Hogan and Mary Ainsworth[23] find that babies obey their mothers' commands when the mothers are accepting and sensitive to babies' needs. Mothers who establish harmonious relationships with their babies, who respect them as separate individuals and tailor the daily routines to harmonize with the children's needs have babies who are affectionate and independent, able to play alone and, even at one year, are able to follow their mothers' requests. Two measures of discipline—frequency of commands and frequency of physical intervention for discipline—were not related to babies' obedience. Thus, at this early age, a system of mutual cooperation between mother and child is established and maintained by each acting to meet the requests of the other.

Gordon[24] would predict exactly these results. He urges parents to cooperate with children by listening to needs, responding to them, and modifying the environment so that children can explore safely. Cover all electric outlets with plastic plugs. All harmful substances—medicines, cleaning supplies—and potentially dangerous tools and utensils must be put well beyond the reach of the curious child. So, too, should things that you value, from fragile glassware to books. These changes create a safe environment in which the child is free to explore—one in which parents and child can relax. Parents are sometimes amazed at their baby's ability to reach what they consider remote spots. When you babyproof your home, be sure that you do not underestimate your child's ability to reach dangerous substances.

Even so, the child will inevitably want to play with something that is dangerous or that you want to preserve. When this happens, Gordon suggests that you "trade"—find a different but safe activity to offer as a substitute. He uses the example of the child whose mother substituted a pair of stockings with runs for a new pair the child had found and wanted to play with. The child was still able to enjoy the texture and to tug at the stockings, and the mother's needs were also met.

Trading and finding acceptable substitutes requires ingenuity. Gordon describes how one mother problem-solved in such a situation. This mother wanted her baby to stay in the playpen while she cleaned the house, and the baby wanted to be out, crawling around and exploring. The mother put the child in the playpen and offered him a bottle, which he threw on the floor, then a rattle, which he ignored while continuing to cry. Then she remembered a trinket she had bought. She got this and wrapped it in a box with ribbons, then gave it to the baby. The package immediately caught the baby's attention. He stopped crying and spent half an hour undoing the box and playing with the trinket, and the mother was able to do her housework.

Dreikurs[25] talks about the same situation. However, he sees the cause of the problem as different. The baby has always been held and wants mother to amuse her. Dreikurs says it is important for the baby to learn to play alone at least a portion of each day. "Provide toys for her to play with and leave Barbara to her own resources. . . . A definite time of day should be set aside during which Barbara is left to care for herself." The tone sounds stern, but the main difference between Gordon and Dreikurs here is the amount of time the mother will spend searching for appealing toys to satisfy the child's need for novelty.

The behaviorists suggest another way of setting limits. Krumboltz and Krumboltz[26] talk about developing an unpleasant association with a forbidden object or act, to stop unacceptable behavior. They give the example of a young child visiting a relative who builds model ships. The father sounded an old-fashioned automobile horn each time the child approached one of the fragile models. The child was startled, and after six sounds of the horn, she stopped approaching the ships. If the parents had said "No" just before sounding the horn, this experience would have helped the child learn the meaning of that important word.

Parents have to be careful not to create unpleasant associations with the wrong things. Krumboltz and Krumboltz tell of a baby who is sitting on the floor crying because she wants crackers. If the mother puts this child in her playpen every time she cries for crackers, the child may stop this behavior, but she will also begin to dislike the playpen.

Setting limits is a problem only in the last few months of the first year, because then the child is able to crawl around and get into more things. In the early months, the main tasks are meeting basic physiological needs and organizing the daily schedule. Setting limits does occur there, but indirectly in terms of not giving the child more food, letting the child cry. Physical limits—"You can't go there," or "You may not do that"—do not occur as frequently because babies are not as active. There is more information on this topic in the chapter on toddlerhood.

PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES

Feeding

Newborns quickly learn to coordinate sucking, swallowing, and breathing in a smooth, regular pattern. They can perform this feat about three times as fast as an adult. In fact, adults might choke if they tried to suck and breathe as fast as babies do. Babies two to six days old can vary sucking behavior and learn to exert different amounts of pressure on the nipple.

Experts have argued for years about which is better for the baby—nursing or bottle feeding. Some experts felt if the child did not have the satisfaction that comes only from nursing, he or she would suffer deprivation that might have lasting effects on the personality. A longitudinal study[27] made over eighteen years compared the social and emotional characteristics of bottle-fed children compared to breast-fed children. This study revealed that there were only a few significant differences between the two groups in personality characteristics and these could have occurred by chance. The kind of feeding by itself was not significant.

Today we realize that nursing has physical advantages for mother and child. Mothers' milk contains antibodies that protect the infant from disease while the baby's immunological system is becoming functional and efficient. And nursing is beneficial for the mother's physical condition. When a woman nurses, that causes the release of hormones that help the uterus contract to its normal size.

The act of nursing provides all the kinds of stimulation that babies enjoy. They are held and sometimes rocked as they nurse. They can see the mother's face. Sometimes the mother talks or sings, so that all senses are stimulated in a pleasurable way. However, the baby who is being bottle-fed can also be held and rocked and sung to. A recent study reveals that most stimulation occurs between spurts of sucking, and that breast and bottle feeding mothers engage in about equal amounts of stimulation. Since nursing takes longer, breastfed babies get more sucking, and they are usually the ones to terminate the feeding.

Women's attitudes about nursing and their experience with it depend on many factors. If a woman's mother nursed, she is more likely to nurse. If the husband shows no jealousy of the nursing interaction, a mother tends to breastfeed. Mothers who have positive attitudes about nursing before the delivery generally obtain great satisfaction from nursing. Many choose to nurse because it offers them a way of continuing the close physical tie with the child. They feel they achieve a sense of emotional union with the child that is not equaled in any of the other caretaking activities. Mothers may decide not to nurse because they fear that the child may not get enough to eat, that they may not have enough patience. Some women are concerned that breastfeeding will decrease their attractiveness.

In addition to attitudes and previous experiences, events at birth influence breastfeeding. A mother who nurses her child just after delivery continues to do so for a longer time than a woman who must wait to have the first nursing. Thus, nursing can be encouraged by recent experiences as well as past ones. If a woman truly wants to nurse but has been discouraged from doing so by those around her (her doctor or family members), she can find useful information in *The Complete Book of Breastfeeding* by Marvin Eiger and Sally Olds.[28]

Self-demand (defined as feeding whenever the baby wishes) versus scheduled feedings are often an issue in the early months of life. While self-demand is generally encouraged, it can become oppressive for the mother if the infant prefers irregular, closely-spaced feedings. If a mother finds that the baby's demands are excessive and that she is exhausted or needs time for herself, a schedule can be imposed. The time between feedings can be lengthened by giving the baby a bottle of water to satisfy hunger and a pacifier to satisfy the urge to suck.

Colic is a parent's nightmare in the early months. The child with colic cries intensely for a prolonged period after a feeding, sometimes several hours, because of gas which is not released. The crying may occur at a particular time of day or at any time. Colic usually lasts until the infant is about three months old, but in some babies it persists longer. Babies with colic seem to thrive physically and to gain weight, so neither the colic nor the crying result from undernourishment. At present the exact causes are unknown.

One mother described how she tried to problem-solve the situation by trying various ways to soothe her colicky son. He suffered from gas pains and was also upset by too much stimulation. During the first four months, she found that this baby was happy doing only two things—eating and bathing. She bathed him every day, and he floated in the water, kicking happily. However, he woke up each night crying. After many nights of interrupted sleep, she brought him in bed with her, minimized the possibility of rolling over on him by propping herself with a pillow. For ten weeks, she took the baby into her bed and he slept peacefully. If left in the crib during those months, he would cry for hours.

At first this mother found that what she ate seemed to affect the colic, so she ate smaller amounts of the offending foods. As the child grew older, her diet no longer influenced the colic. Her pediatrician suggested that she give the baby a small amount of cereal twice a day, and that she feed the baby at regular intervals. Her son wanted to nurse every two hours, but she was advised to stretch this to three hours so her nipples would not get sore and she would have enough milk at each feeding. A pacifier satisfied the baby's need to suck, and a bottle of water helped to fill him up. Careful and thorough burping brought up some of the gas and reduced his discomfort. A nurse recommended weak tea—a half teaspoonful of sugar added to four ounces of boiled water—to help the child pass gas more easily.

Music and a soothing atmosphere helped the child to relax. The mother found that too much noise or excitement in the home triggered an episode of colic. She tried to get the child away from family activity before he became too upset and tense. She gives the following advice to parents:

> If you have a colicky baby, just about everyone will tell you he will outgrow the condition. This is true, although you may not believe it at the time! But the day will come when you will have only a memory of those sleepless nights. Our son turned into a complete angel. He's as good now as he was miserable. He wakes up with a smile on his face. He plays with his toys and can occupy himself for almost an hour at a time in the crib or carriage. Although he's still a high-strung baby, we have learned to recognize situations that will upset him, and we try to avoid them. The first four months are the hardest and it will really get better. Good luck![29]

This mother tried many strategies (mutual problem-solving), and was attentive to the baby's response to each (active listening), gradually gaining insights into what brought relief from the colic and to her own stress. And she learned that the problems of infancy can be handled successfully and eventually pass.

Most feeding problems are not so difficult. Gordon[30] tells how he and his wife used mutual problem-solving, again in a nonverbal way, to solve a feeding problem. When their daughter was five months old, the family went on a camping trip in northern Wisconsin. At home the baby had been sleeping through the night, from 11:00 P.M. until 7:00 A.M. However, the first night in this new physical environment, she woke up at 4:00 A.M. Not only did the parents want to sleep later, but the cabin was so cold at that hour that they had to get up and build a fire. This required mutual-problem solving, because there was a conflict of needs. The parents gave the baby her last bottle later than usual, and their daughter slept a little longer in the morning. The next night they gave more milk at the last feeding, and she slept through to her usual 7:00 A.M. feeding.

Dreikurs[31] urges parents to establish a pattern, so the child learns regularity. The pattern will depend on the age and characteristics of the particular child. But once the schedule is set, it is unwise to deviate from it unless changes in the child require changes in the schedule. Children can adjust to minor variations—if a feeding must be a few minutes early or late, there is no need for concern. Dreikurs also advises parents to remain quiet and calm during feeding, because parental anxiety can upset the child. Parents can handle the problems of feeding if they realize that the baby has a drive to eat and survive.

Behaviorists would agree with Dreikur's approach. They place special importance on the feeding situation, which they believe is the foundation for learning. The main reward for an infant is a warm bottle or breast. Since the mother is present just before and as milk is given, the presence of the mother becomes reinforcing. Once the connection between mother and pleasure is made, her specific acts—smiles and verbal statements of affection and praise—become reinforcing as well. Later in life, acts associated with parental approval become reinforcing

BOX 6.1
ELEVEN TIPS TO HELP YOU COMFORT YOUR COLICKY BABY

Mothers of colicky infants gave me these suggestions, I tried all of them with Michael and found many of them helpful. Experiment and see which works for you and your child. Don't be discouraged; a method that doesn't work one day may work the next.

Hold the baby face down across your lap with your hand between his legs, under the stomach, holding the pacifier in his mouth. Bounce your legs up and down.

Hold the baby upright with his head resting on your shoulder and bounce him.

Place a small pillow on your lap and lay the baby face down with his stomach on the pillow. Rub his back or bounce your legs up and down or do both.

Rock the baby in a cradle. Do not use an infant swing, which may be uncomfortable and, in my opinion, unsafe, for a newborn.

A carriage is a tremendous help. If you are lucky enough to have nice weather, a walk in the carriage in fresh air is wonderful. Michael was born in extremely cold weather, and we brought our carriage indoors and rocked and wheeled him around the house.

Seat the baby on your lap, supporting his neck and spine, and rub his back gently.

Place the baby in the crib, face down, and bounce the mattress or shake the crib gently.

A front-carrying baby carrier is fine for babies who are comforted by close contact.

A ride in the car is an instant tranquilizer for many babies.

A change in scenery worked wonders with our son. As soon as he learned that having his snowsuit put on meant that he was going outdoors, he became calm and happy while being dressed. Spending too much time in the house is boring for parents and child alike.

Diverting his attention was most important in relieving nervous tension and keeping him happy. Holding several objects or toys in front of him, one at a time, helped to keep him from crying.

SOURCE: Sharon J. Sherman, "Coping with Colic," *Parents Magazine*, November 1979, p. 103. Copyright © 1979 Parents Magazine Enterprises. Reprinted from PARENTS by permission.

and facilitate learning. Cuddling, holding, exposure to new stimuli, and opportunities for mastery are also important sources of early pleasure and can be linked to new reinforcers.

Dressing

In the very early weeks, children may fret while being changed. But they are still so small that they do not kick or flail their arms very much. And an infant's clothing is simple, so changing and dressing a baby can be done quickly. If the parent and infant both enjoy this activity, it can be prolonged. However, as children grow during the first year and become physically skilled, they are more active in their protest, kicking and wriggling and making it difficult to dress them. Gordon[32] cites the example of how a mother handled her daughter's squirming behavior on the changing table with active listening. The child cried when her diapers were changed because a bowel-movement during her nap made her red and sore. Although the child was pre-verbal, the mother looked at the baby calmly and said that she knew how it hurt, but that the change would make her more comfortable. The child immediately calmed down, and although she whimpered with the pain, she did not fight the mother while the diaper was being changed.

Dreikurs[33] gives a similar example of an eight-month-old baby who kicked and screamed when her mother changed her diapers. However, in his example, there was no particular reason for the child to be upset, and Dreikurs interpreted the screaming as a method of seeking attention. The mother's task was to secure Lisa's cooperation by changing her own behavior. When Lisa was quiet, the mother was to talk to her with a warm smile, saying how quiet she was being. This was intended to reinforce Lisa's quiet, cooperative behavior. If Lisa started to scream, the mother was to put her hand quietly on the infant's body, with "loving firmness," until she stopped wiggling. As soon as she wiggled again, the mother was to hold her briefly, until she stopped. Dreikurs does not consider this a form of reward or punishment, but a way of winning Lisa's cooperation. The intent is to teach Lisa that if she is quiet, the change goes faster than if she squirms. Behaviorists would follow a similar plan but would talk in terms of rewards for quiet behavior.

Both Gordon and Dreikurs advocated talking warmly to children and dressing the child quietly and calmly. They use different terms but suggest similar actions.

Crying

An infant's cry evokes a response even from a total stranger. The cry is this small and dependent creature's way of expressing a need—for relief from hunger, from the discomfort of a wet or full diaper, from pain, from being too cold or too hot, from a yearning to be held and cuddled.

When a nursing mother hears a baby—any baby—cry, she simultaneously feels milk surge into her breasts. Recent evidence[34] suggests that mothers respond most intensely, as measured by physiological behaviors, to the crying of their own

children. Thus, mothers seem to be programmed to respond to their babies' communication of need for help.

Gordon[35] assumes that a baby cries for a reason, and that for each reason there is a remedy. If you think the baby is hungry, try feeding him. If crying continues, check to see if the diaper is wet, try burping the baby, try cuddling the baby while sitting in a rocking chair. In Gordon's terms, this search for a solution embodies the principles of active listening and I-messages, but with an infant the communication is with action instead of words.

With experience, parents learn to distinguish among cries—to recognize a cry provoked by hunger and differentiate it from one caused by a gas pain and from one that asks for a dry diaper. And they learn what to do to soothe their new baby. Gordon emphasizes that, when responding to a baby's crying, parents should be sensitive to the infant's needs, cooperative and accepting of the baby's behavior, and communicative through action. These suggestions are based on the same principles that Gordon emphasizes for older children. The main difference in applying them to infants is that communication is nonverbal.

Dreikurs[36] has a somewhat different approach to crying. Like Gordon, he believes that parents should pay attention to infants' needs. But Dreikurs advises doing this by establishing a structured routine in which children are fed, dried, and cuddled at regular intervals and at specific times. When children cry after these needs are met, they are asking for undue attention, Dreikurs says. He believes that infants are independent persons who require some help but are capable of adjusting to life's demands. Once basic needs, which include cuddling, are met, then babies must adjust themselves to the established routine. Parents were advised not to pick the child up at every cry.

The behaviorists handle crying in a similar manner, but explain that they do so because undesirable behavior (crying) should not be rewarded. Behaviorists believe that if a parent picks up a child every time he or she cries, the child is rewarded for crying and will continue to do so, and will become spoiled.

Judy Dunn[37] reviews ways of providing comfort to crying babies and finds that, around the world, caregivers soothe by "rocking, patting, cuddling, swaddling, giving suck on breast or pacifier." Research indicates two important features of soothing techniques. First, effective techniques provide a background of continuous or rhythmic—as opposed to variable—sensations for the child. For example, constant temperatures, continuous sounds, and rhythmic rocking at a steady rate reduce the amount of time the infant cries. Second, effective soothing techniques reduce the amount of stimulation the baby receives from his or her own movements. Thus, holding and swaddling reduce sensations from the child's flailing arms and legs, and thus decrease crying.

Sylvia Bell and Mary Ainsworth[38] conducted a thorough study of crying in the first year of life, obtaining surprising results confirmed in other studies. Careful home observations were made. The timing and duration of the child's crying, the circumstances preceding crying, and the mother's responses were recorded and averaged for three-month periods, so the findings of this study describe change in the four quarters of the first year.

These researchers found that babies had as many crying episodes at the end of the year as at the beginning, but they spent much less time in each episode. Mothers tended to be consistent in how much they ignored the baby's crying, and there were marked differences among the mothers. One mother ignored only 4 percent of the cries, and one mother ignored 97 percent. Although each mother's behavior was consistent from quarter to quarter, the crying of each baby was not consistent until the last two quarters.

How does the baby's crying relate to the mother's behavior? In the first quarter, there was no relationship. In the second quarter, a trend appeared and was significant in the third and fourth quarters. Those mothers who responded immediately to the cries of the baby had babies who cried less! Conversely, ignoring a baby's cries seemed to increase the amount of crying as measured by frequency and duration. Those mothers who responded most at the beginning of the year had less to respond to at the end of the year.

What did these mothers do in response to crying? The most common response was to pick up the baby, to have contact with him or her. Some mothers talked to their babies or touched them. Others approached their babies but did not touch them. (Thus, all these mothers reduced the distance between themselves and their babies—behavior that was evoked by the crying and that appears to strengthen attachment.) What is most effective in terminating crying? Picking up and holding the baby stopped the crying in 80 percent of the situations in which it occurred. Feeding, which involves physical contact, was almost as effective. The least effective method was to stand at a distance and talk to the child. By the end of the first year, any act that reduced the distance between mother and child stopped the crying. Although some maternal responses reduced crying more than others, the single most important factor in stopping the crying was the promptness with which the mother responded to the cry. If she came quickly, crying tended to decrease.

These investigators consider crying a form of communication—a signaling to the mother that something is wanted. They speculate that as other forms of communication develop—gestures, facial expressions, and vocalizations—crying diminishes. Support for this speculation comes from the finding that ratings of infant communication in the form of gestures, vocalizations, and so on were negatively related to crying.

Does this mean that parents must *never* let their children cry for food or other objects? No. It means, in general, that a prompt response is best. But when all of an infant's needs have been quickly and completely attended to and crying persists, then the baby may have to be left to cry itself out.

Playing

Much of what infants learn about the world they learn through exploration and play. As a baby matures during its first year, parents find that the ways they play with the baby also change. In the early months parents play games with a lot of touching, to capture the child's attention and provide laughter. When babies are older, games like pat-a-cake and peek-a-boo include more physical activity and more interaction.

Robert McCall[39] has studied play behavior in over 200 infants ranging from seven and a half to eleven and a half months of age, seeking to understand the factors affecting play behavior at these ages. He varied the toys, used several measures to describe the play, and looked at sex differences and individual differences in exploration and play. His conclusions can be summarized as follows: beginning at about six months, babies are interested in the physical aspects of objects—the shape, feel, weight, and action of toys. The more things to investigate about an object, the longer a baby will interact with it. Once she is familiar with a toy, she puts it aside for awhile, and then returns to it later with renewed enthusiasm. As babies mature, they spend less time putting things in their mouths and more time manipulating objects. If the object makes noise, wiggles or moves, the baby will elicit these responses over and over. If a toy is too simple, or too complex, the infant will lose interest in it quickly or ignore it altogether.

At seven to eight months babies differ in their approaches to play. Some are serious and spend time manipulating objects, watching carefully to see what happens. These children exhibit the most complex forms of play. Other babies—who spend as much time in play—are more active and are eager to produce action with objects. They hit, bang, and bounce the toys and seem to enjoy the motion and the sound. And some babies hardly play at all, moving quickly from one object to another or sitting and looking at the room, the furniture, the walls. These individual differences usually are not stable. As babies mature, the style of play is related.

to the object and to their own skills and inclinations. By the end of the first year, children go beyond the sensory qualities of toys and try to figure out what they can do with objects. They try to dial a telephone and talk, or they try to stack a set of plastic donuts. They play more imaginatively with toys for longer periods of time.

PARENTS

Parental expectations

When parental expectations of children are positive, they contribute to the child's self-esteem and growth. When parents think children are special, important people with excellent abilities, children blossom and think well of themselves. They may not be more talented than average, but feeling special enables them to try activities and gives them confidence to reach out happily to others.

The baby's inborn reflexes guarantee survival and effective functioning in the early months. Adults do not have parenting reflexes, but parents seem to respond effectively to children without realizing it. We appear preprogrammed to respond positively to the qualities of babyishness. Mothers have been observed to change their play behavior in subtle ways as their children's abilities and capacities change. Mothers are not aware of these small changes, but their adaptations exactly fit the babies' changing needs. In meeting the challenges of parenting then, parents can be heartened by their own wisdom.

How parents change

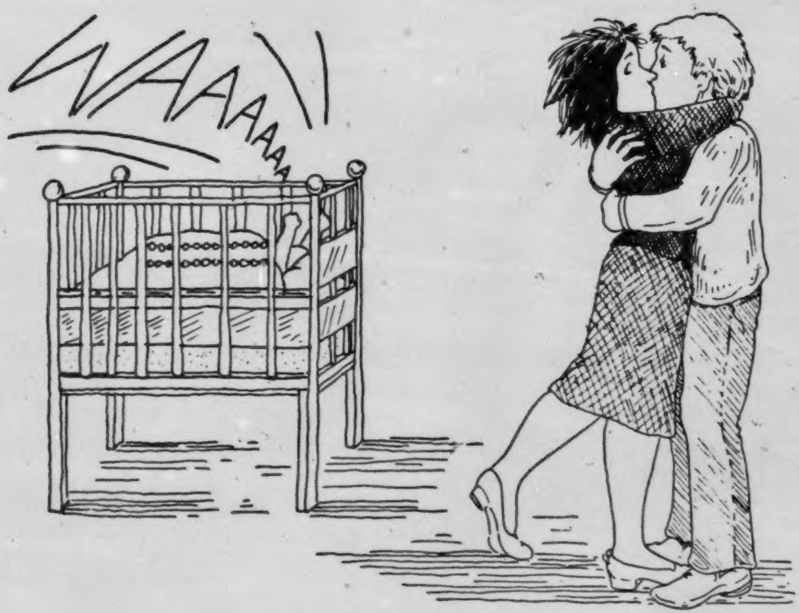
After a baby arrives, the parents and household change and are never again the same. Many of the earliest changes are stressful. And they occur at a time when the mother's physical energy has been drained by pregnancy and delivery and both parents are tired from lack of sleep. Studies vary in estimating the severity of the crisis of new parenthood, but clearly this is a time of stress as well as a time of joy.

A significant number of new mothers report[40] specific problems, including: (1) tiredness and exhaustion; (2) loss of sleep, especially in the first two months; (3) concern about ignoring husband's needs; (4) feeling inadequate as a mother; (5) inability to keep up with housework; and (6) feeling tied down. Mothers did not anticipate the many changes that would occur in their lives when their babies arrived, in part because they did not realize how much work is involved in caring for an infant. Fathers had a similar ordering of complaints: (1) loss of sleep for up to six weeks; (2) need to adjust to new responsibilities and routines; (3) disruption of daily routines; (4) ignorance of the amount of work the baby requires; and (5) financial worries (62 percent of the wives were employed prior to the child and only twelve percent afterward). Husbands make such comments as, "My wife has less time for me" and "Getting used to being tied down is hard."

An often unexpected and surprisingly frequent source of stress is the indifference some new parents—including mothers—feel for their newborn babies. This may follow an unusually long or painful labor, or pregnancy, it may be an expression of fear of what may seem like an overwhelming new responsibility, it may be a response to an unplanned infant or one of the "wrong" sex. Or it may be simply a lack of instantaneous and deep tenderness for a stranger, even one who has in some ways been part of one's life for many months. Whatever the cause, this is not an unnatural or an uncommon response. Even a mother who had developed strong and positive feelings for the baby growing in her womb may, to her dismay and—unfortunately—that of others, find that she feels little emotional involvement with the small person handed to her after delivery.

The new father may see the infant as a threat to his relationship with his wife and to their life style. Concern about the amount of time and money and freedom that the baby will surely consume can obscure the joy he expects—and is expected—to feel. No more candlelit dinners, or even impromptu decisions to go to a movie or to make love, not for a while. The father has not had the physical experience of carrying the baby for nine months, nor is he likely to be as involved as the mother in the care of the newborn. And for a while, at least, the needs of the baby will come before the wishes of the husband—and those needs will be frequent and unpredictable, delaying meals and interrupting sleep. But almost all fathers and mothers find that emotional attachment to their babies grows and deepens if they are patient and caring.

In the first few weeks after birth, obstetricians advise restraint from sexual intercourse. During this period the new mother is especially vulnerable to infection, her energy has been drained by pregnancy and birth, and her days and nights are devoted to care of the newborn. She is fulfilling the demands of an inarticulate



and very dependent creature that she perform many unfamiliar tasks along with the usual household and personal routines. The interruption of lovemaking, a source of pleasure in marriage, adds to the feelings of stress felt by both parents after childbirth. During this early period of physical and emotional adjustment, the wife—particularly the working wife—needs time to regain her stamina and to establish new routines.

When concern about infection is no longer a factor and the wife is again feeling energetic, many couples find that their sexual activities are more satisfying than before. Many women report that after the first baby, they understand and appreciate their bodies in new ways and feel more self-confident and pleased with their femininity. These feelings, along with the physiological changes (including increased blood supply to the genital area, which permits increased vasodilation), result in more intense and pleasurable orgasms for many women. Patience and sensitivity to each other's needs can lead to lovemaking that is more pleasurable than ever before for both wife and husband.

Couples who are prepared for the stresses that accompany the arrival of a new baby experience less anxiety and turmoil. Marriage and family courses in high school, family planning, childbirth courses, and satisfactory marital adjustment before the birth can alleviate stress after birth. The unknown is much more frightening and difficult to cope with than what we understand. The couple who have a realistic notion of how parenthood will change their lives will experience less stress from unanticipated problems. And they will be more open to experiencing joy in their new child and their new roles.

How can couples cope during this transition period? Social scientists emphasize the importance of communicating feelings and needs in open and nonjudgmental ways, of negotiating solutions when conflicts arise, and of sharing responsibilities for care of the infant and for household chores.

Gordon's active listening, I-message, and mutual problem-solving techniques are just as relevant to husband-wife interactions as they are to parent-child relations. Such techniques can help each partner to be aware of how the other is feeling and of what can be done to resolve problems.

Mother Care,[41] a book written by two social scientists, provides useful information about diet, exercises, and routines that restore health, energy, and serenity in this period of tumultuous change. While obviously written for women, the book can provide husbands with insights into what their wives are experiencing. And men, too, can profit from the tips on how to rest and relax.

The father is sometimes seen as a passive onlooker in the parenting crisis. He may feel completely shut out, may feel that his wife is absorbed in caring for the baby and taking care of her own physical needs. But he is a very important part of the family unit. Even if he can only help out in the evenings or on weekends, he will find that that diminishes his wife's sense of having to do everything herself and increases his involvement with the baby. His help, support, interest, and concern for the mother and child promote the well being of all three. Women whose husbands give them such support nurse more effectively and feel more positive about themselves and their babies.

Fathers can, from the very beginning, be active participants in the parenting process. They can feed, dress, and diaper their babies. They can cuddle and soothe and burp them. They may be more physical and playful than mothers in their interactions with children, and this can enhance social development. It seems likely that loving care from a second adult makes the world seem safer and more fun. And the father who is an active parent becomes more mature and richer in the process.

After the baby is born, the mother may, at times, feel tired, discouraged, and sad. Physicians and nurses who work in hospitals report that 80 percent of new mothers have crying spells and postpartum blues at some time during their hospital stay.[42] In the weeks after the baby is born the mother may, from time to time, experience sadness, discouragement, and crying spells. These feelings are a natural part of the stress of incorporating a new baby into the family.

Awareness of the difficulties of the postpartum period and of specific ways of reducing stress have helped mothers deal with the emotional upset at this time. Husbands and friends can provide emotional support and can be available if the mother wants to talk about the worries, concerns, and frustrations she is feeling. The mother can set priorities and give attention to the activities most closely related to the well-being of family members. It is more important for the mother and baby to be clean than it is to have a shining floor. It is more important to have nourishing food, even if simply prepared, than an elaborate dinner. And it is more important to look after the needs of immediate family members than to entertain friends and relatives. The mother needs the kind of thoughtful care she gives her infant. She, too, must have enough rest. And she needs at least a little time she can spend alone or in a special, personal pursuit. A stable and serene environment helps to diminish stress. This is not the time to move or take on a new job if these can be avoided.

If sadness persists and is accompanied by early morning awakening, loss of appetite and weight, apathy, or inability to concentrate and remember, then the new mother should seek both a thorough medical check-up and psychological counseling.

Despite all the stresses of parenting, many mothers experience increased self-esteem as they meet the challenges of infant care. And as men become involved actively in the care of their newborn sons and daughters, they, too, experience psychological growth.

FACILITATING DEVELOPMENT

A cardinal principle of parenting is attention to the unique qualities of each child, and at no time is this more important than during infancy. We have noted individual differences in style and approach to the world, in what soothes a child, in how much stimulation fosters development. In the early months, parents can observe what interests, pleases, and comforts the child, and how these change. As the child grows, parents can provide stimulation and interaction that fit their unique and changing child.

A parent can monitor external stimulation. Some babies need more, and some need less. Escalona[43] reports that active babies practice their skills against a background of normal family activity. Less active babies need attention from one person who provides stimulation in direct interaction. Very active babies easily become overstimulated. Such children should have a calm atmosphere, if they are to remain alert and responsive to the world rather than fretful and irritable.

Most parenting time in the first year will be spent taking care of physical needs, providing affection, and playing with children. Emmi Pikler,[44] [illegible] European pediatrician, advises parents to use the ordinary routines of child care as opportunities for learning and for social interactions. All too often, a parent changes a diaper or feeds the child while doing something else—usually while talking to another person. Pikler recommends focusing attention on the infant, telling him or her exactly what is happening and what you are doing as you feed, diaper, dress, and bathe the child. You can help the baby focus and understand what is happening if you go slowly and are relaxed, and talk in a quiet voice about what you are doing. Many mothers find themselves doing this naturally—"Let's take off the wet diaper. First, I unpin it, then I get you a nice dry diaper and pin it on again. That feels much better, doesn't it?" The Pikler method emphasizes showing the child the pin and the diaper as they are named. The child learns and at the same time experiences the mother's undivided attention. This need not be done at every routine procedure, but certainly it should be done often.

From the earliest months and throughout development, children should be given opportunities to influence what happens to them. Infants experience joy, pleasure, and effectiveness when they have a chance to act upon the world. If you notice things that your very young baby likes to watch, or favorite activities at particular times of the day, try to arrange the day to satisfy these interests and preferences. For example, one mother noticed in the hospital that her newborn liked to look around while being held after his 6:00 P.M. feeding, and so she tried to plan an extra period of holding at about that time.

As babies gain control of the trunk and can sit alone and crawl about, they become capable of doing more for themselves. They can eat finger foods without help, suck oranges, eat toast, use a spoon. Encouragement and opportunities for self-care should be provided for babies. Some of the holding and cuddling they still need and enjoy can be given while looking at picture books or naming objects.

Mobiles, attractive pictures on the bedroom walls, and good lighting all provide environmental stimulation. Objects that hang in the crib or the carriage and encourage exploration at the child's level of development are useful. After the first few months, small objects that the baby can grasp and mouth but not swallow are attractive toys. Objects that have several potential uses are perhaps best—toys that can be grasped, banged, dropped, mouthed. McCall[45] recommends that toys for children in the last half of the first year should include a variety of objects that "(a) provide opportunities for a more complex investigation of the possible functions of the object, (b) lend themselves to unique activities (bouncing, rolling stacking, etc.), (c) reward creative interaction (e.g., clay, xylophone, blocks), and (d) can elicit imitated behaviors (e.g., telephone, tea set, lawn mower)."

Why do psychologists suggest that you talk to your infant even before the baby can talk? Research indicates that vocalizing not only soothes the child, but also stimulates development. Children are more alert and more attentive when an adult has talked to them. Some adults like to use short, simple phrases, other parents prefer to speak in their usual manner. Both you and your baby will have fun if you respond to the baby's vocalizations with words, then wait for the baby to "answer" with increased attentiveness, physical activity, or babbling and cooing.

Psychologists have written little about the importance of music in the first year, and singing and crooning to babies are not often emphasized. We know that the human voice soothes infants and brings them to an alert state in which they are more responsive to what is going on around them. Music with clear words may be especially useful, not only in soothing but also in facilitating language development. Studies with brain-damaged adults reveal that they can learn to talk if they first learn to sing words. The result of this work cannot be directly generalized to babies, but cultural patterns that emphasize lullabies may contain a good deal of wisdom.

During the last part of the first year, as children become more mobile, they need more opportunities to explore and move about. Freedom to explore in these months is associated with the ability to control behavior and follow maternal commands. It is also related to later language development. Paradoxically, opportunity for independence appears to help a child to communicate with others and conform his or her behavior to the needs of others. The environment must be "baby-proofed" so that the child can explore safely and the parents can relax and enjoy this activity, too.

Some parents use playpens to keep children from wandering into unsafe places. However, psychologists like White[46] advise against using playpens, because they prevent exploration. Parents are also advised to purchase a bottle of ipecac to have immediately available as an antidote if a child swallows poison or any other internal irritant.

Many psychologists have described the egocentrism of the baby in the first year. But observant mothers have long realized that babies can enjoy each other's company and the company of older children. Babies can learn things from older children that they cannot learn from an adult. For example, one mother reported that her ten-month-old child learned how to crawl upstairs from a three-year-old brother. She had tried without success to teach the younger child to navigate the steps. Slightly older children may understand exactly what makes it difficult for the baby or may know exactly how to demonstrate what they are teaching, because they are closer in age and pattern of thinking to the infant. If there are no other children the same age as yours in the family or neighborhood, you may want to arrange a regular play group with the children of friends.

SUMMARY

We have looked at the baby's development from birth to one year and have seen that newborns are equipped with reflexive behaviors that enable them to survive and adapt. They are equipped with sensory, intellectual, and social abilities so that they can make discriminations among sensory stimuli, coordinate information from two or more senses, and learn stimulus-response-reward patterns. Newborns appear preprogrammed to respond to human beings. They are most sensitive to the human voice and gain most pleasure from looking at the human face.

In the course of the first year, they gain control over their bodies and learn to sit alone, crawl, stand, and often to walk. They have a lively interest in the world and reach out to explore everything within reach. From the early days, they gain great pleasure from having an effect on an object—pushing a ball, grabbing or kicking to make a mobile move. Language starts with cooing and babbling and then, by the end of the year, a few words.

Many psychologists believe that the spark for growth lies in the attachment that the baby forms with the caregiver. A strong, secure bond between parent and child grows in the first six months, if parents are sensitive and accepting of the child's needs and able to establish routines that harmonize other family members' needs with the needs of the child. Babies relate to other children as well as to parents and can enjoy social play far earlier than was thought twenty years ago.

As children are actively involved with people and objects, they gradually begin to develop a sense of themselves as separate individuals. A complete sense of identity comes later, at the end of the second year, but an infant six to eight months old recognizes herself in a mirror. Babies also develop a wide range of emotional reactions in this first year. By the end of the year, a baby can express anger, fear, joy, pleasure, curiosity, surprise.

Parents in the early months are caregivers, meeting the child's basic needs, reducing tensions, and monitoring the amount of stimulation the child receives. The sensitive caregiver pays attention to the individual qualities of the child and tailors parenting behaviors to meet individual needs. As babies become physically more competent, parents become playmates and conversationalists.

We have examined the kinds of situations in which problems can occur—feeding, dressing, crying, establishing limits, and we have looked at ways of handling them. Development is facilitated when parents create a strong attachment and provide toys and opportunities for exploration.

We have also looked briefly at how parents change in the course of caring for infants. Both parents are important in welcoming a new child into the family and as participants in the magical process of growth.

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7

Toddlerhood: The years from one to three

This period is of great importance for several reasons. Children take their first steps, they say their first sentence, they run for the first time. As toddlers increase their physical and verbal skills, they become more independent of parents and able to do more to care for themselves. They feed themselves, go to the toilet, partly dress themselves. The developing sense of self is frequently expressed in negativism; in refusing to do what others want, the toddler achieves a stronger sense of who she is. Happily, the child outgrows the negativism.

Life with toddlers is rarely dull. Their busyness, intensity, curiosity, independence, and increasing verbal skills make them both exciting and frustrating for parents. We are pleased by their achievements, intrigued with the observations they verbalize, and sometimes outraged at their stubborness. Toddlers develop subtle skills of persuasion and distraction.

Although important milestones occur in this period, psychologists have studied it less than any other. Until recently, toddlers have not been as available for study as infants who could be seen in hospitals or as preschoolers and school-age children who are studied in school settings. Among the few books that focus on the toddler years are T. Berry Brazelton's *Toddlers and Parents*,[1] Jean Carew, Itty Chan and Christine Halfar's *Observing Intelligence in Young Children*,[2] and Frank Caplan and Theresa Caplan's *The Second Twelve Months of Life*.[3]

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

By the end of the first year, the tiny newborn has become a little person who can probably stand alone and may even be able to walk. The average one-year-old is between twenty-seven and twenty-nine inches in height and weighs about twenty-one or twenty-two pounds. By the end of the third year, height has increased to about thirty-six inches and weight to about thirty-five pounds. Growth in the second and third years is slower than during infancy, but is still rapid—and about twice the rate in the years from three to five.

Growth in this period is related to such environmental factors as the quality and amount of food, the absence of chronic illness, medical care, and the socioeconomic status of the family. Growth is also related to social and geographical conditions. For many years the average height and weight of people in industrialized countries have been increasing. Now this growth is thought to be leveling off. Studies suggest that chronic illness and deprivation of food may cause a temporary halt to growth but that when these stresses pass, catch-up growth occurs. Growth of an individual who has suffered from such illness or deprivation is not permanently stunted unless the stress occurs over a long period.

Now let's look at the development of motor abilities. By the time the child is two, the motor and sensory areas of the cortex are well-developed, and this is reflected in increasingly complex motor behavior.

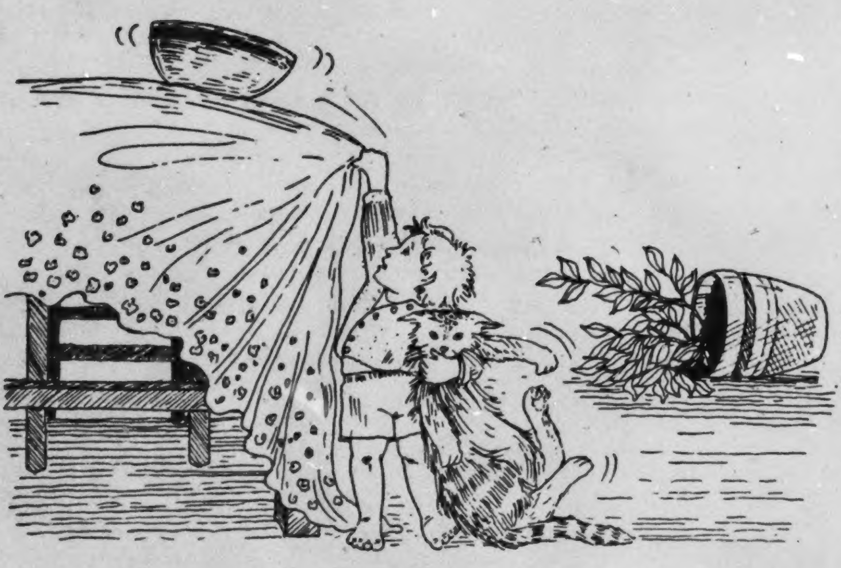
As babies gain experience as upright creatures, they modify their walk so that the steps are longer, the gait is smoother, and the width of the stepping gait is decreased. At about twenty-one months the baby starts running. This activity requires the coordination of trunk and limbs and is more difficult to achieve than walking. By age three, walking and running are automatic activities, and other motor responses are carried out with confidence and verve. For example, at about twenty-six months, the child can carry a small chair, holding it under the arm. By thirty-three months the child can walk a straight ten-foot path that is only a foot wide. Children can jump from a height of eighteen inches and descend a staircase, with support, while alternating footsteps. Most children of three can pedal a tricycle.

The ability to throw also becomes refined. The baby of about eleven months can throw a ball from a sitting position, but is not yet able to send the ball in a specific direction. Not until about thirteen months can children repeatedly toss a ball to an adult on request. At about eighteen months, children can throw from a standing position, taking a few steps before and after the throw. As they grow older, the swing, toes, and body movements become more coordinated.

Reaching and grasping develop rapidly in the first year of life. By eighteen months, reaching has become automatic, and the child focuses on the object to be reached rather than on the process. Manipulation of objects began during the first year. During toddlerhood the child develops the capacity to combine objects—to put several cubes in a cup, build a tower of three blocks, or place pellets in a bottle. And the ability to perform more difficult actions also grows. The toddler can put a key in a lock and grasp a spoon and fork for eating. Many children this age begin to write. By age two the toddler can draw vertical lines with a pencil, build a tower of six blocks, and use a stick to get a ball that is out of reach. By age three the child can draw a circle, build a tower of nine or ten blocks, and catch a ball with arms rigid and fully extended.

The act of releasing an object is more difficult than reaching for and grasping it. In the second year, the letting go process creates difficulties when children are building towers or releasing pellets into a bottle, for example. At one year, most children are able to hold a pellet over a bottle, but only about half of them are able to let it go. This is because control over finger extension occurs only after reaching and grasping are well developed. By age three, releasing has become a smoother process.

Motor development continues to bring the child into wider contact with the environment. Now the toddler can walk, run, and throw. She can move around more easily and cover more area. At the same time, motor development is increasing the complexity of behavior so she can reach and get into new places—higher shelves, cabinets with doors, desk drawers. Visual-motor coordination improves, permitting drawing, scribbling, and manipulation of small objects. The British call this child "the runabout" baby, to capture the incessant activity and curiosity of the toddler. Toddlers are on the go. They roam around a strange room, enjoying both moving and exploring. They poke at objects on a table. They open and close the drawers of a desk. All of this activity is punctuated with occasional glances at adults, to determine if all this exploration has violated any rules. A toddler's facial expressions are often serious; exploration requires concentration. When especially delighted with an activity, the child will smile and chortle and may repeat an action or bring a found object to a nearby adult.



Children enjoy exercising and experimenting with the skills they are acquiring. Often they experiment with new ways of looking at the world—for example, bending over to watch the world upside down between their legs. Children often develop new ways of walking—perhaps with a limp, keeping one leg stiff, with the head held to the side, or running and collapsing in a heap, as if all the air had been let out. As they get greater control of their bodies, toddlers begin to dance and twist about, imitating current dance steps. Games are improvised around their new skills. One toddler developed a baseball game that could be played in the kitchen with a wooden spoon and a tennis ball.

Children know no limits to their skills and will try to plunge into activities with older children, attempting to play ball or hide and seek with older siblings or children in the park. Even though they are just beginning to run, they try to be part of a group.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Increased physical competence and the joy of exploration and exercise lead to activities that expand the child's understanding of the world. Let's look at how Jean Piaget[4] describes development at this time. Toddlers are in the last two stages of the sensorimotor period and the first stage of the preoperational period.

In the stage of *tertiary circular reactions* (twelve to eighteen months), the child's interest is directed beyond his body and beyond objects as tools to discovery of the properties of objects. The understanding that each object has an independent existence and permanence leads to exploration of these objects and how they work. Toddlers are curious about textures—they like to stroke a dog or cat and rub their cheeks against the fur. They are attracted to water and to toilets, and will run again and again to play in the bathroom.

They are miniature scientists. They drop different objects and note how each falls; they drop the same object from different heights and watch it descend. They fill the toilet bowl with toilet paper and toys and learn that the paper falls apart, but the hard plastic toys are as good as new.

Toddlers observe the world around them and develop ideas about what will happen if they perform certain acts and about how objects work. As they observe and have more experiences, their ideas increase in complexity. For example, children observe that when they drop an object, it falls. And before long they learn that some objects drop better than others and some objects break when dropped. Piaget calls these internal ideas about objects and events "schema." Children's ideas, or schema, gradually modified by experience, serve to guide their actions.

> Brenda sips a glass of milk in her highchair. She pushes the glass away, sliding it along the table top. Suddenly she drops a piece of meat into the glass and it sinks. She startles slightly and then deliberately puts a potato chip in and it floats. She looks puzzled. Brenda puts her hand deep into the glass and seems to be searching for the piece of meat at the bottom. She lifts the glass toward her, peers into it, then pushes it away. Brenda puts her hand in

again and waves her fingers about in the milk several times as if trying to reach the meat.[5]

In this period, children become capable of more accurate imitation. During the first year infants can imitate spontaneous movements that are much like their own actions—waving bye-bye, for example. Toddlers are more advanced. They can watch a model and imitate in a controlled fashion. The toddler pushing a teddy bear in a stroller or having a tea party for her dolls is imitating. Parents often delight in children's perception of behaviors—the toddler's imitation of his father going to work with exactly the posture and gestures of the father, or laughing in a conversational tone just as a parent does.

The sixth and last phase of the sensorimotor period is *the invention of new means* stage (eighteen to twenty-four months), thought to serve as a transition from the sensorimotor period to the beginning of thought. Up to this time, Piaget believes children are limited to immediate experiencing of objects, people, whatever is present at the moment. They act on what they see. However, as the child emerges from this period, we see the beginning of language use and of symbolic or mental representations. Piaget illustrates with the example of his sixteen-month-old daughter, who saw another toddler have a temper tantrum when he was put in his playpen. The next day she herself, when placed in the playpen, had an identical tantrum for the first time in her life. Clearly, the child remembered the tantrum in some symbolic form and imitated it after a period of delay.

At about two, children move into the *preoperational period*, which is divided into the *preconceptual period* (from years two to four) and the *intuitive period* (from four to seven). In the *preconceptual stage*, the child is able to represent mentally what is seen and observed in the environment. Recall the temper tantrum acted out by Piaget's daughter. Clearly the child had a memory for the event, but what was the mental representation? Children do not have the language needed to describe what they see, so this probably could not have been a verbal memory. Piaget suggests that children store the memory of the motor movements associated with the visual images. A child who saw a bicycle might store a memory of the bicycle moving back and forth. During this period language develops rapidly, and imaginative play and deferred imitation increase. Parents are often amazed at what children are able to remember and imitate later. One sixteen-month-old child startled his parents one day by nonchalantly taking the mother's key ring, walking over to the front door, and from many keys selecting the correct one.

Like Piaget, Burton White[6] describes the toddler's increasing intellectual competence. While he, too, notes children's curiosity, exploratory drive, and mastery of motor skills, he focuses on behaviors not referred to by others. He points to the "growth of learning-to-learn skills" during the period from eight to fourteen months. Children at this age cannot build products or draw pictures, but they are learning the skills they will need to do these things later. They are learning how to put things together and take them apart. These skills are enjoyable in themselves, and they pave the way for more complex behaviors.

In the period from fourteen to twenty-four months, White emphasizes the quiet activities that often can go unnoticed and the busyness of the period. For example, he describes the importance of staring: "The most common nonsocial behavior during [the period from fourteen to twenty-four months] is simply staring at objects, people, or events. As we have seen, some 20 percent of all waking time is spent in looking about in a steady fashion at one object, person, or scene. Why children spend so much time in steady staring is not clearly understood. It seems to be a simple form of exploration of the world."[7]

White also observes that children of this period engage in "behavior which is apparently purposeless, when the child seems to be just hanging around or 'idling.' "[8] From 1 to 30 percent of time may be spent in standing around. More than 15 percent of time spent in this nontask behavior seems to be associated with poor development. A related form of experience White calls "passing time." The child is not doing much but is restricted in some way from initiating activity. Parents often do not realize that children do a lot of waiting. Children must wait for parents to put them in car seats and get them out; they must wait to be taken out of bed, out of the high chair; they must wait for lunch. Often they cannot get out themselves and must wait passively. If time in the high chair or playpen is spent playing with toys, looking at books, or exploring some part of the world around them, it is not considered "passing time."

White emphasizes that parents should encourage children's various interests—in the caretakers, in exploring the world, and in mastering skills. Occasionally interest in exploration is emphasized to the exclusion of interest in people, or attachment is stressed to the neglect of exploring the world. At this period the child should be engaged in a variety of activities—developing language, noticing small details, and planning and carrying out activities.

In the period from twenty-four to thirty-six months, the child's mental power and ability to control emotions have increased with an accompanying rise in social activity. At age two, the child spends about 20 percent of her time in social activity and 80 percent in nonsocial activity; at age three, the corresponding figures are 30 percent and 70 percent. The nature of social interest changes too. The two-year-old has contact primarily with the mother, but with age, spends more time with children. In this period, creative activities and imaginative fantasies increase as well. Parents have an important role in helping the child to maximize these skills.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

You will recall that babies can discriminate among sounds in the first month of life. At about eight months they begin to comprehend words, and at about a year they begin to produce words. The year-old baby is able by changing intonation, to use a single word to express statements, requests, questions, and commands. A two-year-old has a vocabulary of perhaps fifty words, and this increases to about nine hundred words by the time the child is three.

Characteristics of the parents and the home in the first two years contribute to children's language competence.[9] A strong, positive emotional tie with the mother—enhanced by the amount and quality of the time the mother spends with the newborn and by the mother talking to the child, asking questions and responding to what the child says—increases the child's verbal abilities. Homes that facilitate verbal skill provide many opportunities for exploration and play, and they are organized and structured in atmosphere.

How do children develop the ability to speak in such a brief period? Twenty years ago psychologists thought children learned language because parents reinforce a baby's babbling, reward the use of words by meeting the child's requests, and serve as models. Current theories suggest that children learn to talk by learning the structure of language—how words are put together. They learn formulas and rules for linking words to express experience. Usually they learn the words that refer to meaningful aspects of their lives—mama, dada, cookie. Sometimes, however, they learn a word and then search for the experience that it represents. Thus, words can expand a child's awareness as well as reflect it. Exploration and stimulating emotional relationships may be predictors of verbal competence, because they supply the essential ingredients for communication. Exploration leads to experiences the child wants to communicate about, and the emotional tie provides someone to receive the communication.

There are individual differences in the vocabularies of toddlers and in the complexity of their language. Some children have vocabularies of fifty words by the time they are fifteen months old, others by the time they are two years old. The first words of most children name familiar objects, describe actions, and express preferences.

Children use different strategies in learning words. Some say little, listening to words but not trying to produce them. When they understand enough words, they begin to talk freely and well. Others use many words, seeming to try out words to see if they are appropriate. Children are motivated to learn to speak by the desire to communicate.

Katherine Nelson[10] identifies three functions of speech: *interpersonal, instrumental,* and *referential.* The child uses words in an interpersonal manner to create a bond with the mother, father, sibling, or relative. The instrumental function is seen when words are used to gain an end—more milk, a cookie, a ride in the car. Words are used in a referential way to specify objects or people in the environment. Children who use language for interpersonal or instrumental purposes develop different vocabularies from those who focus on referring to or describing objects. The former are more expressive in their speech ("love you," "help," "me," "more cookie," "want dog") than the latter ("see doggie," "see kitty"). Parents can learn how their toddlers use words by keeping diaries of first words and early word combinations.

A review[11] of the speech of two-year-olds around the world reveals that the two-word sentence, appearing between eighteen and twenty-four months, is a telegraphic communication that omits such words as *of, an, the* and emphasizes the actor-action-object dimensions. Children communicate many different kinds of information and can specify: (1) identification (see doggy); (2) location (coat there); (3) recurrence (more milk); (4) nonexistence (cookie all gone); (5) negation (no milk); (6) possession (Daddy car); (7) agent-action (I want) and (8) subject action (Mommy throw); (9) location (Mama chair); (10) action recipient (bottle me); (11) action instrument (cut knife); (12) attribution (hat pretty); and (13) questions (Mama go).

Martin Braine[12] has identified a groping pattern—the child's first uncertain attempt to convey a meaning, accompanied by repetition and hesitation. A groping pattern occurs whenever a child is moving to a more advanced stage of speech—for example, from using one word to two-word combinations. A parent may worry when a child seems to stutter or stammer, but this groping does not last very long. Toddlers can convey meanings with two words, changing inflection to change the meaning. "Mama go" may identify mother's leaving, the child's insistence that he be taken along, or a desire to leave a particular place.

Individual differences in language development occur not only in rate of development but also in the time and order in which patterns of speech emerge. For example, some two-year-olds learn actor-action sequences (kitty meow) before identification patterns (doggy there); other children acquire the patterns in reverse order. Some emphasize possessives first; others refer to place. These individual differences in the order of emerging patterns of speech probably reflect differences in personality and orientation in the world.

Children go through a process in which they overgeneralize rules. For example, as a two-year-old begins speaking, she may say "It broke," using the correct form of the past tense break. As she becomes sensitive to the rules for forming the past tense—adding *ed* to a verb—she will go through a period in which she says "It breaked." Similarly, children may learn early such plurals as feet, mice, and men. But as the rule for forming plurals—adding *s* or *es*—is learned, the child may overgeneralize and say foots, mouses, mans, or add an *s* to the irregular form and say feets, mices, and mens.

Girls excel in verbal skills from the first year of life, and their ability is predictive of intellectual performance from age six well into the adult years. It is not clear whether parents provide early stimulation of girls' abilities or whether they have an innate advantage. Recent studies[13] suggest that in the second year differences in verbal skills are evident in the average length of a child's remark, rather than in the number of words known.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The toddler is gaining mastery of physical and verbal abilities. The liveliness and intensity of behavior of these children is expressed in many ways. The child eagerly sets out to explore his world, happily absorbed in what he sees and does. But he relies on the secure emotional attachment to the caregiver as a solid base that he seeks out whenever he needs advice, help, or a joyful companion to share his excitement and discoveries. The stronger the tie, the freer the toddler is to explore. As the toddler's sense of self matures and he can do more, he becomes self-directed and insistent that parents and others do what he wants. He enjoys other children but may find it hard to subordinate his wishes to the behavior of others. While able to express anger when frustrated or opposed, the toddler also can be sensitive and empathetic, especially if he sees such behaviors modeled by parents.

Attachment is an emotional tie that results in the child wanting to be with the parent (or other caregiver), seeking her or him out, and being upset at separation from that person. The quality of the child's attachment to the mother (or primary caregiver) determines the capacity to relate to others and to explore the world. Sroufe and his coworkers[14] found that securely attached one-year-olds are later more curious; they attack a new problem vigorously and positively. While they persist at a task, they are able to accept help from the mother and are not aggressive. Their mothers are supportive and helpful. Children whose attachment is tenuous are anxious, throw more tantrums when presented with problems, and are more negative in response to the mother, ignoring and opposing her in different ways.

Patterns of attachment usually are stable from twelve to eighteen months when the home environment is stable, but changes in the family can affect patterns of attachment.[15] The kind of relationship the child has with the mother in the second year of life predicts preschool behavior two years later. Securely attached toddlers are outgoing preschoolers who are well-liked. They are sympathetic to others, suggest activities, and are able to be leaders. When involved in their own activities, they are self-directed, goal-oriented, eager to learn new skills and to develop their abilities. The bond with the mother, then, increases the self-esteem and self-confidence that give the child a positive view of the world and permit exploration and satisfying interaction with others.

The mother's behavior shifts as the child's independence grows. There is less physical contact, less caretaking, less social stimulation. Instead, the mother serves more as a mediator and provider of a stimulating environment. The mother's way of interacting with the physical environment of objects and toys influences the behavior of the child, who appears to adopt the mother's mode of response. As children become more active and independent, mothers scold and punish more.[16]

Although the mother clearly influences the child, the child's behavior affects the mother by intensifying the attachment bond. The more the child reacts to the mother by looking, smiling, or vocalizing, the more affectionate and responsive the mother is to the child's needs.

Cross-cultural work[17] suggests children need not spend all day with parents to have strong attachments. In Israel, children whose mothers are away most of the day have attachments as strong as children whose mothers are at home in this country. It is possible that only a limited amount of contact may be necessary for attachment; once this occurs, attachment may not be related to increasing amounts of parent–child interaction. The quality of the mothering may provide sufficient stimulus for attachment.

The child's increasing independence changes the quality of the attachment. As children spend more time in independent activity, parents intervene more to stop them when their activity is not approved. In one study[18] of two-year-olds, mothers intervened every six to eight minutes to stop a behavior or give a command. Mothers were most likely to interfere with the activities of boys. Children generally did what mothers asked, but when children asked their mothers for something, the mothers filled the request only about 50 percent of the time.

Like the infant, the toddler seems to be about equally attached to father and mother. Still, the child at this age prefers the father as playmate, because he is social and physical in play, more involved in it than mothers. Mothers tend to choose intellectual and caretaking activities. As children grow, mothers spend less time in caretaking and their interactions become more similar to fathers' behaviors.

Peers

The social world of the toddler includes other children, especially when the child has sisters and brothers. When peers are present in the home, the quality of play and the pattern of mother-child interaction changes. Peers stimulate both a higher level of play with toys and greater social interaction with toys than occurs when mother and child play with the toys. The toddler's earliest play with peers is described as parallel play. When the toddler plays in the same environment with other children, "he plays alone but performs actions similar to those of other children. Not only does he play with the same materials, but he plays with them more resourcefully than when alone."[19] When peers are present, mothers tend to talk less.[20]

Wanda Bronson[21] believes that during play with peers, toddlers learn what other children *are*. Initially they learn that peers are different from adults. They expect that their age mates will respond to them and their behavior as adults do—smiling, vocalizing, and entering into give-and-take games under their own control. They quickly learn that peers are not miniature adults. Next, they learn the effects of their actions on peers. In the most mature stage, a toddler does something in relation to a peer—for example, offers a cookie—and experiences a sense of mastery as the peer responds in a predictable fashion, by eating the cookie. Interest in the peer is increased as he or she becomes more understandable to the toddler and interaction leads to a sense of competence and mastery.

Self

In the toddler years, children's sense of self solidifies. They say "I want," "I need," and "Mine!" They become aware of their sexual identities and increasingly assert themselves in a variety of interactions with both parents and peers. This assertiveness often results in temper tantrums, which reach their peak in these years. The increased ability to express the self also produces signs of affection for and empathy with others.

Sexual identity

At about age two, the child's sexual identity has formed, and the child proudly announces, "I am a boy" or "I am a girl." By the age of four, it is as difficult for a child to change gender identity as it is for an adult. John Money[22] states that gender differentiation results from an interaction of physical, psychological, and social forces.

Physical influences include genes, which in utero trigger hormones that lead to the development of both internal reproductive organs and external sex organs.

Assignment of sex at birth is determined by the physical characteristics of the genitals. Societies and subcultures within societies have beliefs about what is appropriate for boys and girls. Once a child is designated a boy or girl, that child will be dressed, played with, and caressed in particular ways. Parents will expect and approve specific behaviors from each sex. Children have a firm sense of sexual identity by about age two, and can easily say they are boys or girls, without changing their minds. They learn what is sex-appropriate by observing the same-sex parent for what is approved and the opposite-sex parent for what is not approved. Children then behave in ways that match what they observe. A little boy will line up little tools just the way his father does, or a little girl may brush her hair just as her mother does.

In our own society currently, many parents value similar qualities in men and women. We want both sexes to grow up to be assertive and gentle, to be effective producers and warm caretakers of children. We want to avoid rearing "the real boy" and "a little lady." However, research[23] published in 1978 has found that, without being aware of it, even parents who do not want to express sex-biased attitudes toward children treat their toddler boys and girls differently. Observers found that parents encourage boys to manipulate objects and to learn about the world and discourage them from asking for help. Parents encourage girls to ask for help and to help with tasks. Parents criticize girls for running, jumping, climbing, and manipulating objects. Although the parents who participated in this study deny any sex-bias in their childrearing attitudes, their behavior encourages a more outgoing, assertive, curious approach to the world for boys, and a more person-oriented, service approach for girls.

Another recent study[24] found that children as young as three years of age agree on what is expected of boys and girls, both in the present and in the future. Boys are active builders who help father and behave aggressively; girls are talkative, help mother, play quietly, never hit, but ask for help. Men are bosses, mow the grass, and can be doctors and pilots; women clean house, rear babies, and are nurses and teachers. Those who hope for less sex-stereotyping of behavior in the future will be encouraged by the fact that boys and girls believe both sexes have a common core of positive and negative traits—both sexes are described as strong, kind, fast runners, unafraid, messy, dirty, smart, and quiet. In addition, children had positive beliefs about their own sex and negative beliefs about the opposite sex. Parents can help children build a firm, positive sexual identity by stressing that both sexes can develop positive qualities of strength, kindness, intelligence, confidence, and competence.

Assertiveness

As the toddler becomes more exploratory, more independent, and more definite in her sense of who she is, she becomes more assertive in interaction with parents and peers. Toddlers are assertive in many ways. As they did in the first year of life, they assert themselves by refusing to do what parents want. "No," becomes a common word, and toddlers sometimes practice it, saying "No" as they play alone. They turn away from food, and wriggle and squirm as parents try to help them dress.

Even more frequent in this age period is the assertion seen in the child's insistence that she can do something by herself or in her own way. "Me do it," or "My way," are common refrains. Children also like to command parents, sometimes adopting an imperious tone as they say, "Come now!" or "Do that!"

Assertion turns to frustration and anger when the toddler cannot accomplish what she set out to do. Sometimes she cannot make a toy work or reach the light to turn it on, and she gets angry. Other times, adults intervene—they won't let the toddler fill the dog's bowl with milk or sprinkle detergent on the floor. When a parent's intervention or an immovable object frustrates the toddler, she usually expresses her anger physically—yelling, crying, throwing herself on the ground, holding her breath, throwing an object. These physical activities release the pent-up tension that the child cannot yet express easily in words. Temper tantrums occur in the toddler period, but as children acquire greater skill in language and become more competent in achieving their ends, tantrums decrease.

Empathy

At the same time that anger is on the increase, expressions of affection and empathy increase as well. In the second year babies begin to give signs of affection—love pats and strokings—to parents, particularly the mother. They are also affectionate to animals and younger children.

Empathy develops in stages in the toddler period.[25] At ten to twelve months, babies respond to other children's distress by crying with agitation. However, in the second year they take action, touching, cuddling, or rubbing the injured party. An eighteen-month-old girl, upset by her baby brother's crying, brought him a diaper to hold, because she liked to carry a diaper for comfort. Between eighteen months and two years, children begin to imitate the emotional reactions of the hurt individual, mimicking facial expressions of pain. Many go through a process of referring the pain to themselves. If a mother bumps her arm, the child rubs the mother's elbow, then his own. Compassionate action follows the self-referencing behavior. Investigators suggest that true kindness may depend on the ability to relate the other's distress to self.

What qualities in parents stimulate empathy in a toddler? Children who are kind and helpful in response to the suffering of others have mothers who are warm, caring individuals, concerned with the well-being of others. These mothers expect children to control aggression, and when they do not, mothers show disappointment—"Children are not for hitting," "Stop! You are hurting him." The researchers conclude that mothers of empathetic children model kindness to others, but they go beyond that to teach children how to do what is expected. They maintain high standards and continue a warm, caring relationship with children.

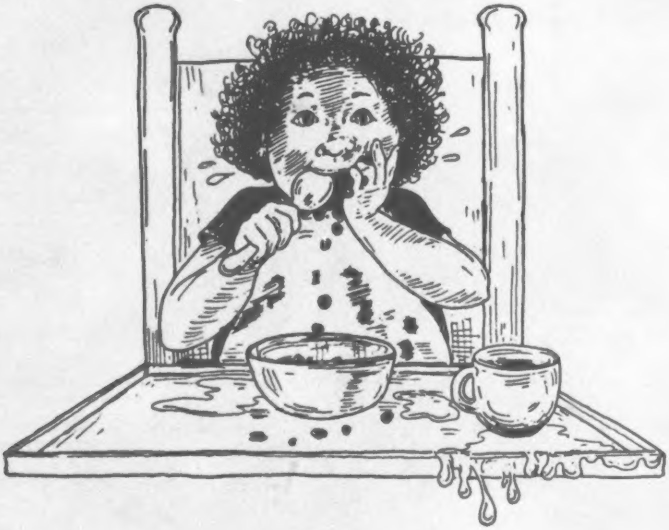
Often children show great distress when parents argue and display hostility.[26] They express their feelings in a variety of ways—running out of a room, crying, covering their eyes and ears, hitting or hugging parents. It is wise for parents to recognize that even in the toddler years, children have a keen sense of others' emotions and are distraught when parents are angry with each other.

Eating

At about a year of age a child is likely to grab the spoon from the parent who is trying to feed her—she wants to try to feed herself. The exact age at which a child has the physical skill to get food in her mouth varies. Benjamin Spock[27] believes the most important determiner of self-feeding skill is the young child's opportunity to feed herself. If she gets finger food during the first year, she may be ready early to use a spoon for other foods. Spock encourages parents to let their children feed themselves at twelve to fifteen months. If parents wait, they may find that their two-year-olds expect to be fed.

Ilg and Ames[28] encourage parents to let children have their own eating rituals and preferences. During toddlerhood, children often want particular plates or glasses. They may think of some foods as appropriate only for breakfast and want other foods only at lunch or dinner. When parents permit the child to make such choices, the resulting sense of autonomy reinforces feelings of competence and self-esteem. Some parents worry when a child eats the same foods over and over. You do need to be sure that the child has a balanced diet, but there is always time to introduce variety later.

All methods suggest patience and understanding in helping children to learn how to eat. Most eating problems during toddlerhood are related to the mechanics of eating—the child is still developing the skills needed to get food to the mouth without dropping or spilling it, and the control needed to sit quietly at the table. All schools encourage independence in eating. Even a two-year-old child can be told



how to get his own drink of water in the bathroom or to get a piece of fruit from the kitchen table. The parent's work is reduced and the child's self-esteem grows.

In conflicts, Gordon is more likely than other strategists to seek a solution that satisfies everyone's needs. He gives the example[29] of the toddler who left his bottle on a new rug in the living room. Milk leaked through the hole in the nipple and stained the rug. The mother made the hole in the nipple smaller, but still it leaked. She finally solved the problem by putting water in the bottles that he sucked in the living room, so that when they leaked no stain remained. She gave him milk in the bottles he drank elsewhere. Both mother and son were happy with the solution.

When a child begins to sit at the table and eat with the family, a few simple rules should be established. Gordon suggests that if a child breaks a rule, the parent should send an immediate I-message expressing displeasure, and should use active listening to understand the child's response. If, for example, a child reaches over and takes food from the mother's plate, the mother can take the food back and give the child food from the serving bowl. There is no need for words. This simple, immediate, nonverbal I-message is adequate.

Dreikurs believes children of this age can eat meals with the family as soon as they can feed themselves and can obey the rules established by the parents. If they cannot feed themselves, they are fed before the family mealtime, so that their feeding does not disrupt family relationships. Mealtimes are opportunities for the family to share conversation and humor. The child's preferences are considered, and the child is given small portions. But the child must eat everything on her plate, so that she will have a balanced diet. And she must behave well. No scolding, threats, or punishments are given. If rules are broken, the child is sent from the table and permitted to join the family at dinner the next evening. If a child does not come when called for dinner, her food is served cold. If a child dawdles, her plate is picked up when the table is cleared, whether she is finished or not. Dreikurs pays attention to individual needs in making the rules, and the child is expected to follow the rules without being reprimanded.

Behaviorists[30] emphasize breaking the act of eating into small steps and giving reinforcement as each step is accomplished. Thus, as a child learns to eat with a spoon or to hold his own glass, behaviorists recommend praise or other reward for attempts at independence, even if food is spilled or help is required. As the child's skill increases, parents reward complete success. Parents must be careful not to reinforce disapproved behavior. For example, if a child whines and cries for a cookie and then receives it, whining is rewarded. Parents can request that the child stop whining before he gets the cookie.

Dressing

Dressing is an activity that children master slowly. By eighteen months of age, children will try to undress themselves, pulling off socks and shoes, and by about age two, they will be able to take off all their clothes. Dressing, however, requires skill, and it is not until age three that children can put on an easy item like a jacket.

At about age four to five, they can completely dress themselves, including tying their shoe laces.

Dressing can be fun for both parent and child. Children can learn colors as parents name them; they learn to manipulate zippers and snaps; they play disappearing and reappearing games as they poke heads and arms through shirts and sweaters. The parent's task is to permit children as much independence as possible in the process of dressing, but to give help when needed. To encourage independence, parents can buy clothes that are easy to get on—pants with elasticized waists, loose pull-on shirts with big necks. They can encourage self-dressing by putting the item partly on and letting the child complete the act. For example, a mother can help the child get his feet in the pants legs, then let the child pull on the pants, or get his arms in the shirt and let the child pull it over his head.

In the toddler years, dressing problems are likely to center on children's refusing to dress themselves as they can, refusing to hurry and be ready to go somewhere, wearing too few clothes outdoors. Each of the strategists focuses on different aspects of the possible problems. Ginott[31] advises giving young children responsibility for choosing what to wear, as long as the choices are warm enough, and loose enough for running and climbing. Toddlers are not yet concerned about meeting their peers' dress standards, but they often have distinct likes and dislikes of their own. Having their choices respected increases self-esteem. Ginott recommends encouraging independence by buying clothing that is easy for them to put on by themselves.

Gordon[32] suggests coping with dressing problems by setting limits with verbal or nonverbal I-messages. If a child does not want to wear what is necessary, a parent can express concern about the child getting sick. If the child squirms and makes dressing difficult, Gordon again advises holding him and restraining his movements as a nonverbal I-message.

Dreikurs[33] focuses on teaching children how to dress and undress themselves. Even at an early age, children can learn if parents make the process a game. Children can play the game of pulling socks off or putting them on. As they get a little older, Dreikurs suggests "giving them permission" to dress themselves. A child may seek attention by asking for help even though he can dress himself. Parents must refuse to help and wait while the child completes the task. Dreikurs tells of Wendy, almost three, who waited, as if helpless, for her mother to dress her so she could go outside with her four-year-old sister. The mother was advised to allow Wendy plenty of time to put on her suit, and to encourage her with, "You're able to get it on by yourself now. When you're ready, come out." If Wendy cries and refuses to go out, mother does not give pity or help. When Wendy does not get attention, and in addition, misses the fun, she will dress herself. A child may take off a piece of clothing, or put a piece on wrong. Sometimes parents can let them take the consequences, but not if the child then risks illness or injury.

Behaviorists[34] take the same approach as Dreikurs, suggesting that parents teach the child to dress and ignore bids for attention by refusing any help when the child does not really need it. However, they use social rewards for success in ways that Dreikurs would not. They suggest breaking dressing down into small steps that the child can accomplish and giving praise after each step. "Your right hand in your coat sleeve. Good! Your left hand in your coat sleeve. Good! Now pull up the zipper and off you go!"

Toilet training

Most experts suggest that sometime between eighteen and twenty-four months, children are ready to learn approved toileting behavior. Nathan Azrin and Richard Foxx[35] suggest three guidelines for determining the child's readiness: bladder control (the ability to stay dry for several hours, anticipate urination, and urinate a significant amount at one time); physical readiness (the ability to get to the toilet by herself and the dexterity to get her pants down); instructional readiness (the ability to understand an instruction and the ability to communicate a need).

T. Berry Brazelton[36] adds several other indicators of readiness: (1) the child has mastered running and walking and is able to sit and play quietly for a period of time; (2) she shows an interest in the toilet; (3) she wants to imitate adult behaviors, like brushing teeth and eating neatly; (4) she knows when she has to go to the toilet and understands why it is desirable to wait until she gets to an approved place; (5) she shows an interest in neatness; and (6) she is not highly negativistic.

All methods of toilet training (1) take account of the child's physical readiness; (2) teach steps of the process through instruction or observation of others; (3) suggest that parents remain calm and unperturbed by accidents; (4) refuse to give punishments for accidents. The methods differ in the use of material rewards and praise. Ginott, Gordon, Dreikurs, and to some extent Brazelton recommend taking the accomplishments as indications of the child's natural capacities. The behaviorists and Azrin and Foxx use praise and rewards of candy or food, but they move in the direction of accepting the feat as a matter-of-fact event.

Ginott suggests that when the child is physically ready, the parents state clearly, "It was fun to mess when you were a little baby. You like the warm feeling inside your diapers, but we don't want that now anymore. Now we want to do it on the potty." The parents provide opportunities for messing with mud and clay or finger paints. They are careful not to associate any harsh physical treatments or punishments with the anal area.

Gordon reports a mother's account of how she trained her twenty-two-month-old boy. Since the mother relied on his older sister to help him, the exact method cannot be used by all families. But any parent of a child who is ready to be toilet trained can assume that the child can help train himself. In Gordon's example, the mother told the toddler, when he asked to be changed, that she did not want to do that anymore, that he was big enough to go to the toilet like his older sister, who was four. A day later the mother found the older sister holding him on the toilet and telling him to go potty.

Dreikurs suggests a casual approach. The child learns by being put on the toilet at regular intervals, whether he needs to go or not. He is left there just a few minutes. This is continued until the child asks to go to the toilet himself. This method, like all others, requires time and patience. The parent does not get angry or irritated. Each day the parent puts pants on the child to see if the child can stay dry, but changes them if necessary. If the child wets after being trained, parents can look for a cause—a new baby, a move, change in friends—and can use diapers for one day, but they should return to the routine the following day.

Parents are advised not to give undue attention to toilet training. Do not talk about it much or give much praise, because then the child can use the achievement to frustrate parents if he is angry. The child can also gain power over the parents by going to the toilet when parents do not want him to.

The behaviorists see parents as having a more active role in shaping and guiding the behavior. Krumboltz and Krumboltz[37] report an example of the behavioral approach. A mother began to take her toddler to the toilet when she expected he would urinate. After a few days, he urinated in the toilet, and she rewarded him with candy and praise. Every time he successfully used the toilet, he got the reward, but when he failed, the mother said nothing and didn't get upset. When using the toilet began to be a habit, the mother gave praise but no candy. She was able to omit the praise when the habit was firmly established.

Azrin and Foxx, the authors of *Toilet Training in One Day*, describe the most complete approach to toilet training. They incorporate insights from many different schools. The method is very detailed, and only a brief summary can be reported here. The authors introduce the method with the statement, "No 'gimmick' or gadget caused the rapid learning. The child learns so fast because we have used so many factors to make learning pleasant, simple, and exciting."[38]

Prior to actual training, children are prepared in a variety of ways. They are taught to put on their clothes and get them off. They observe other family members using the toilet. They are taught the words parents prefer for urination and bowel movement. The mother or any adult close to the child can prepare him.

Training occurs in several steps. The potty chair is put in a room with a washable floor. The child is dressed in loose training pants that can be pulled down easily, with no jeans or dress over them. The child drinks a large amount of beverages to encourage urinating. Dressed and full of liquids, the child watches the mother potty train a doll as a demonstration of what is expected of the child. As success occurs, the child is given enjoyable snacks for rewards.

Azrin and Foxx emphasize that each child is unique, and that the parent has to pace the teaching to match the child's abilities. First, the child watches the mother teach the doll to go to the toilet. The mother demonstrates how the doll drinks and then wets, and how the doll can use the potty chair instead. Then the child teaches the doll and, by imitation, learns himself. After the doll wets in the potty chair, the child empties the little bowl. The mother has the doll wet its pants, and the child learns to say, "No, dolly, big girls don't wet their pants." The child then helps the doll practice drinking, then wetting in the potty chair. The doll is used until the child clearly understands the steps in toileting. Frequently children learn completely from this practice, without ever being instructed directly. In addition to demonstrating with the doll, the mother gives a verbal rehearsal of the whole procedure and why it is important for the child to learn.

The parent encourages the child to drink at least eight ounces of liquid each hour. Every fifteen minutes, the child goes to the potty, takes down his pants, and sits on the chair. If an accident occurs, the parent is not harsh or punishing.

Expressions of verbal disapproval of the wet pants are given, and the child is asked to practice the toileting actions ten times with the doll to prevent accidents. The parent focuses attention on the wet pants, and the child takes responsibility for changing them. The parent conveys love of the child but dislike of the wetting, and shows the child just how performance is improved—"You must get to the toilet faster," or "You must take down your pants faster."

This is one of the few methods that talks about what should be done if the child has a temper tantrum during the process. The parent must wait until resistance dies down and then proceed with the training in a calm tone, giving approval for all correct actions. Because the process of toileting is broken down into simple steps that bring rewards, the child learns that he is capable of doing what is asked. A couple of tantrums to test the parent's intentions are usually all that occur.

This method, which has been documented with successful results in research studies, draws heavily on behavioral techniques with rewards and vicarious learning through the doll. But the authors pay attention to individual differences in time of starting and in handling temper tantrums. It is the only method that incorporates a doll.

Brazelton has designed a method to help children train themselves when they are ready. The method is similar to that of Azrin and Foxx, but the parent plays a less active role, and the child becomes trained at his own pace. The child becomes accustomed to a potty chair gradually, sitting on it while still dressed, being taken to use it once or twice a day, then having it close by and available to use during play. When the child is used to the potty, he is told that now he is in charge of going to the bathroom. The parent undresses the child from the waist down, so that he can use the potty chair easily, and occasionally reminds him, asking him if he needs to use the potty. If the child rebels or has accidents, the parent puts diapers on him and waits until he indicates that he is ready for training.

Brazelton recommends that a boy stand for urinating after he is trained to use the potty for bowel movements—if the child stands when first using the potty chair, he may not want to sit for bowel movements. Night training, started long after day training is completed, is encouraged by putting a potty chair, painted with luminous paint, next to the child's bed. A night light is on, so he can get up and use it by himself.

Brazelton says that with his method, twenty-eight months was the average age for day control, and 80 percent were trained for night control by age three. Only 1.5 percent were still wetting the bed after age five. Brazelton's method resembles that of Azrin and Foxx, but Brazelton uses fewer rewards, encourages gradual learning of toileting behavior over a period of time, and suggests a less active role for parents.

Before leaving this topic, let us note that even with the most successful techniques in the world, some parents will experience difficulty for reasons beyond their control. An extensive study by Mordecai Kaffman and Esther Elizur[39] of the toilet training process revealed that many factors—physical, personality, and social—feed into the child's ability to be trained. Kaffman and Elizur developed a profile of a child who would be a high risk for eneuresis or bed-wetting. They list these characteristics: (1) occurrence of eneuresis among parents or siblings, (2) high level of motor activity and aggression, (3) poor adaptability to new situations, (4) low achievement motivation, (5) over-dependent behavior, (6) lack of negative reaction to wetness and urine control, and (7) prematurity.

Parents who are having trouble toilet training a child need to remember that this is a new experience for them and for the child. And they need to accept the fact that for reasons beyond the control of both the children and the parents, some children need more time than others to learn toilet habits.

Temper tantrums

The research of Florence Goodenough[40] on anger and temper outbursts provides valuable information on how and why temper tantrums develop and on effective ways of handling anger. She found that many factors influenced the occurrence of anger. Outbursts peak in the second year and are most likely to occur when children are hungry or tired (just before meals and at bedtime), or when they are ill. Thus, when reserves are down for physical reasons, tempers flare. Outbursts are usually short-lived—most last less than five minutes—and with young children under three, the aftereffects were minimal. With increasing age, children tended to sulk and to have hard feelings. From one to three years, the immediate causes of anger seem to be conflict with authority, difficulties over the establishment of habits (eating, baths, bedtime), and problems with social relationships (wanting more attention, wanting a possession someone else has). With older children, social and particularly play relationships trigger more outbursts. After the second year, boys seem to have more outbursts than girls.

Goodenough found that the parents of children who had the fewest temper trantrums used the following methods: diverting the child's attention, reasoning, ignoring the outburst, isolating the child, and scolding. Parents of children who had the most frequent tantrums used the following methods: granting the child's desire, removing the source of the trouble, coaxing, soothing, and threatening. The children who had more outbursts tended to be angry for a much longer time afterward.

The parents of the children who had the fewest outbursts were more consistent, used preventive (rather than corrective) methods of control, used a daily schedule as a means to an end, and had a more tolerant, positive home atmosphere. Parents of children with few outbursts were consistent and fair in the rules they established. They had realistic expectations that children would be independent, curious, stubborn; they anticipated problems and found ways to prevent them. These parents had a schedule and a routine and tried to help children conform by preparing them for changes in activities. They announced mealtimes or bathtimes in advance so children had ten minutes or so to get ready. In these homes, parents focused on the individuality of the child. However, when a real conflict arose, they were firm.

Parents of children with many outbursts were inconsistent and unpredictable, basing decisions on their own wants rather than the child's needs. These parents tended to ignore children's needs until a problem forced them to respond. In some of these families, parents imposed a routine on the child regardless of his activity of the moment and forced the child to act quickly in terms of the parents' desire. Criticism and disapproval characterized the home atmosphere. When children are tired, hungry, or sick, they are likely to respond with anger. Parental behaviors that underlie attachment to the parent—acceptance, sensitivity to children's needs, and cooperativeness—minimize temper outbursts.

With Goodenough's study in mind, let us examine what Ginott, Gordon, Dreikurs, and the behaviorists suggest. Ginott recommends accepting all angry feelings, but directing behavior into acceptable channels. Parents can do this verbally by saying, "People are not for hitting; pillows are for hitting," or "Scribble on the paper, not on the wall." Neither parent nor child is permitted to hit. If tantrums are not ended by verbal statements, parents take action, even in public. In *Liberated Parents Liberated Children,*[41] mothers report stopping the car until the fighting stopped in the back seat, or returning home if a child has a tantrum in a store. These methods require time, but the mothers report success, and say they felt better as a result of taking action.

Gordon suggests finding substitute activities to head off trouble. If no jumping is permitted on the sofa, parents can allow children to jump on pillows on the floor. Once anger surfaces, Gordon suggests that parents listen actively and provide feedback about the frustration and irritation the child feels—sometimes a child needs nothing more than acceptance of what he is feeling.

Gordon recommends mutual problem-solving to find a solution agreeable to both parent and child. But when a compromise is not possible and a child is still upset, active listening may again be useful. He cites the example of a child who was unable to go swimming because he had a cold. When the child's mother commented that it was hard for him to wait until the next day, he calmed down.

Dreikurs recommends many of the techniques that Goodenough found were used by parents whose children had few tantrums. In establishing routines, Dreikurs[42] suggests being flexible with children, concerned with their needs and interests, but firm in enforcing the routines. When tantrums occur, parents are urged to ignore them and leave the room. Ignoring a child is appropriate in public as well as at home.

The behaviorists use a similar method of ignoring. Krumboltz and Krumboltz[43] tell of a little boy who learned that if he cried and had a tantrum, his parents would pick him up instead of paying attention to the new baby. When they realized that their actions were creating the tantrums, they agreed to ignore the outbursts. When the boy learned that he gained nothing by banging his head and demanding what he wanted, the tantrums stopped. The behaviorists insist that parents must be firm and consistent. Otherwise the tantrums will continue, and each time the child will hold out longer, because he has learned that he can win by outlasting the parents.

Strategists who emphasize communication of feelings to prevent tantrums would intervene by reflecting feelings. The parents of the boy who is jealous of a new baby might be advised to comment that the boy wished he could be held like a baby; only after attending to feelings would Ginott, for example, take action. The behaviorists and Dreikurs focus on handling tantrums once they have occurred.

Ginott[44] says that the arrival of a new baby is a stressful event for an older child. He tells parents that, because no one likes to share center stage with another, a child is bound to feel some jealousy and hurt, no matter how well prepared for the event. Parents can say that soon there will be a new baby in the family and that a baby is both fun and a nuisance. They should express, and permit the child to express, negative as well as positive feelings. Before the baby arrives parents can help the child to anticipate the love and the left-out feelings that he will experience. After the child arrives, parents can be alert for signs of jealousy, which they can reflect. If jealousy is repressed, it may be expressed in nightmares, physical symptoms, immature behavior, and hostility toward the new sibling. Ginott suggests acknowledging the older child's jealousy, resentment, and hostility and encouraging expression of these as well as the child's loving feelings. And he suggests special attention and "extra loving" for the older child during these times of stress.

Gordon recommends active listening, so that the child can express fear that the parent likes the other child better, or anger at the intrusion. Active listening means listening to behavior as well as to words, and realizing that when the child becomes irritable, aggressive, or immature, jealousy lies just under the surface. A parent can simply comment, "You are unhappy," "sad," or "lonely."

Dreikurs[45] has a thorough discussion of sibling rivalry. He shows how children's responses to the new baby depend on both their own feelings at the time and on the characteristics of the new arrival. Dreikurs recommends accepting any verbal statements of hostility, any talk about wanting to get rid of the baby. The main way to help the child cope is by making him your partner in caring for the baby. Point out the older child's advantages, how big he is, how well he brings a diaper for the baby or tells a parent she is crying, how smart he is to figure out that the baby wants company. If possible, the father can spend more time with the older child. When the older child makes unreasonable demands for attention, parents should overlook these. Parents can also try to plan special treats for the older child while the baby is asleep. To minimize difficulties as children grow, parents are urged not to compare them.

The behaviorists suggest that when a new baby arrives, the older child can learn to do special tasks that will increase her self-esteem. Eimers and Aitchison cite the case of a child who was always asking her parents if they loved her. At first they answered, but as the question became repetitive, behaviorists advised them to ignore the question and instead to build the child's self-esteem by giving positive attention for what she did well. They began playing games with her and spending more time talking and reading to her. The child felt valued and no longer needed to ask whether she was loved.

Briggs[46] says preventing all jealousy is like trying to eliminate the common cold, but parents can learn to identify the signs of jealousy and can act to reduce it. Jealous children may accuse parents of not loving them or of giving siblings more attention. They may become irritable and fight with parents, deliberately breaking rules and wanting to be punished—even punishment is a form of attention. They may repress feelings and begin bed-wetting and thumb-sucking. Parents help children handle the feelings when they provide opportunities for expression—verbal, as Gordon suggests, and creative, as Baruch suggests. One mother gave her daughter a doll to hit to express the anger the child felt toward a younger sister. Coloring, drawing, and molding clay can also help to express feelings. Briggs also suggests building the older child's self-esteem by teaching new skills that increase the child's competence.

Again the strategists are in general agreement, although they focus on slightly different aspects of the problem. Ginott prepares the child for the birth. Gordon and Briggs elicit feelings through active listening. Briggs suggests ways to drain tension and, along with Dreikurs and the behaviorists, recommends building the child's self-esteem through attention and interest in positive behavior as well as through teaching new skills.

FACILITATING DEVELOPMENT

One of the caretaker's basic functions, according to Burton White,[47] is to design the child's world and daily life. Even before a baby begins to crawl, parents must baby-proof the living area, both indoors and outside, removing all harmful objects and substances.[48] Until children are able to negotiate stairs, they must be prevented from trying to climb without supervision. Medicines, cleaning substances, paints, and all other dangerous materials must be put far beyond the child's reach, perhaps even locked up. Electric outlets that are being used should be behind heavy pieces of furniture, and those not being used should be baby-proofed with plastic outlet covers. And remember, too, that even the loveliest plant may be poisonous—check to make sure that none of yours is. Baby-proofing is essential, because children must have freedom to explore. Toddlers can climb and reach further than you expect, and so great care must be used. White recommends against the use of playpens, jumpseats, and gates that restrict exploration.

Carew, Chan, and Halfar[49] find that optimal intellectual growth is fostered by parents who organize a daily schedule that enables the child to be involved in doing and learning much of the time. And these parents encourage children to help with household activities. Briggs suggests that parents permit children as much independence as possible in the daily routine—giving children time to move from one activity to another and letting them set timers that will ring when it is time to eat or to take a bath or when they must stop playing. When routines must be done, she advises making positive suggestions in impersonal terms, "Time to wash hands," rather than giving orders, "Go wash your hands." Making a game of a routine can help it move smoothly, she believes. Instead of "Come in for lunch," a parent might say "Let's be birdies and fly in to lunch." Parents can learn to enjoy this kind of playfulness by watching nursery school teachers.

Intellectual growth

Parents can stimulate growth by sharing the toddler's enthusiasm and interest in what he or she is doing. When children express curiosity about an activity or object, parents can arrange time for exploration. Parents facilitate language development by talking to children about their activities, listening to their descriptions, responding to their questions, and reading to them. Reading gives the child information about the world by presenting new objects and activities. It is also a source of information about how people respond to challenges, difficulties, losses, pleasure, and fun. The sharing and close physical contact provide happy times for parents and children and contribute to warm emotional ties between them. When family members spend time watching television, parents may not make as much effort as they could to read to children. Reading can be pleasurable for both reader and listener, and it stimulates intellectual and emotional capacities at the same time.

It is important for children to have games, toys, and books available. But White believes that during toddlerhood parents need not worry about providing elaborate educational toys or detailed explanations or discussions in response to questions. Carew, Chan, and Halfar note that an intellectually stimulating environment for children includes only educational television programs, like "Sesame Street" and "Captain Kangaroo." The child who spends time in passive activity has less time for active involvement with the world.

These investigators note that there are many different and effective styles of interacting with children. Some mothers prefer to take an active role in children's play. Other mothers prefer to express interest and involvement by arranging opportunities for the child to explore. Carew, Chan, and Halfar conclude,

> Is there some well-defined route that caregivers must follow in order to promote their child's intellectual development? Clearly not. Once certain ingredients are present—a reasonable level of interest in observing and understanding the child's activities, an adequate amount of involvement in his tasks, a not too heavy use of restriction, a loving respect for his person—individual variation in mother's styles seems to have not much discernible effect on the child's development, at least not by the age of three. Thus, there is probably nothing much to be gained by a mother's adopting a style of interacting which does not come naturally or easily to her, assuming her behavior already reaches adequate levels of understanding, interests, and involvement.[50]

Social-emotional growth

Parents, mothers particularly if they are at home all day, serve as consultants to the child, according to White. Effective mothers are available to the child to answer questions and help. But perhaps most important, in this period when children are doing things for themselves, mothers are there to share the child's delight and excitement in what they do and observe. As in infancy, mothers tend to react promptly to toddlers and do not expect children to wait while parents satisfy their own needs first. White cautions parents, "Be careful as the child passes the first birthday not to let yourself become the child's all-purpose tool. Watch for subtle differences between (A) use of you when a child has determined he can't handle a task himself versus (B) use of you as the easiest way to achieve a goal, or (C) use of you simply to monopolize your attention. (A) is fine, but (B) and (C) lead to an overindulged child."[51] The mother is also the authority who runs the home with a firm but loving hand. Parents establish a firm and consistent family routine and back up words with action when necessary.

Parents who expect the toddler's negativism and understand that this period will not last forever can weather the stage without being overwhelmed by the child's attempt at independence. While it is important to be firm on family limits, White believes that on less important issues it is useful to let the child win some arguments, so that he can see that his behavior has an effect on parents. Briggs suggests other ways parents can help toddlers confirm their separateness as individuals. Parents can, for example, invent games that permit children to practice their negativism: "Is milk purple?" "Do chickies go bow-wow?" Parents can also support children in their desires to have and protect their possessions. Children, she believes, must possess before they can share with others. White suggests that parents ask a child whether she wants to put her toys away when other children play in her room, so her rights are protected.

Toward the end of the toddler period, parents need to encourage children's social interactions with peers, if these have not developed already, and their emerging interests in creative, imaginative activities such as drawing and role-playing.

Social skills that must be nourished in the toddler period include: (1) the ability to get and hold the attention of others reasonably well without monopolizing them, (2) the ability to express emotion spontaneously, and (3) the ability to exercise leadership skills with caretaker and peers. Children need opportunities to express a range of emotional reactions—love, annoyance, pride in accomplishments. Parents should encourage as much spontaneity as they feel comfortable with. If a child is inhibited, emotional responsiveness may be difficult to arouse or develop when the child is older. In talking about leadership with peers, White is one of the few psychologists who talk about the importance of competition: "In the best sense of the term, a competitive person is very much interested in achieving, in doing things well, and in having his output compare favorably with others. It is in that healthy sense that children we have studied have been competitive, and it is in that healthy spirit I urge you to encourage your child in that regard."[52]

White believes that as parents facilitate a child's development they need to achieve a balance among three areas—developing physical abilities, exploring the world, and attending to other people, particularly the caretaker. None should be emphasized to the exclusion of the others. Parents must be alert to their own inclinations to encourage boys to excel in motor skills and exploration, and girls to excel in social interactions. Children of both sexes need both kinds of experiences.

SUMMARY

During toddlerhood children master many physical skills and develop increasing competence with language. Intellectual growth takes a leap as toddlers learn to form mental symbols or pictures of what they see and can recall events for longer. They also become capable of more advanced imitation of adults and other chil-

dren. As their abilities increase, toddlers become more independent of parents. They are able to move away from parents and to explore the world.

They express a sense of self initially with negativism and refusals to do what parents want, then by insisting that parents pay attention to their desires and do things according to the plans of toddlers. Gradually they learn to conform to social rules and still maintain their sense of individuality. While toddlers are assertive and capable of stormy temper tantrums, they are also loving, affectionate children capable of empathy and concern for others.

We have examined problems in the area of eating, dressing, toilet training, temper tantrums, and birth of a sibling. The parents' major task in these areas is to combine patient understanding with encouragement of as much independent behavior as the toddler can perform.

Recurring themes during toddlerhood are: (1) the importance of having opportunities for independent exploration of the world with helpful adults who are available to provide assistance or information if needed, (2) sharing of experiences between parent and child as the child responds to the sights, sounds, textures, and pleasures of the world around her, and (3) reasonable limits to provide structure to the world. Play, independently or with parent or peer, appears a central factor in stimulating development in all areas. Parents often spend hours thinking about correct and appropriate discipline; yet few worry whether they play enough with children or enjoy smiles and laughter in a day. If there is a single message in the material presented, it is to take time to play and laugh and share with the child his or her discovery of the world.

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8

The preschool years

The preschool period from three to five is an exciting time. Children have control of themselves and their bodies. They can communicate verbally and have a sense of identity. They are ready to turn to the outside world to see what they can accomplish. Preschoolers are, as Erikson termed it, "on the make"—striving to obtain goals, enjoying competition with others, and savoring the pleasures of conquest. Their curiosity, their refreshing observations on experience, and their responsiveness to parents and others create anecdotes that parents tell for years.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Although the rate of physical growth has slowed, preschoolers still gain two-and-one-half to three inches in height each year, and three to five pounds in weight. By age five, they are about forty-two inches tall and forty-two to forty-five pounds in weight. The physical growth of the brain has been rapid since conception, but is now slowing. By age three, the brain has grown to 80 percent of adult size, and by age five to 90 percent. In this two-year period from three to five, growth increases in connections between parts of the brain. This facilitates control of voluntary movements and increases alertness, attention, and memory. These developments underlie observable changes in motor and cognitive abilities.

In the preschool period children gain greater control of their bodies. By age five, they have an easy gait and take longer steps when walking and running, and they have a grounded sense of balance. They can stand on their toes for several seconds, and they can stand on one foot with their eyes closed. They can skip with both feet off the ground, and many can make a broad jump of twenty-eight to thirty-five inches. Fine motor coordination improves, as well, and children can draw, use scissors, and begin to color. By age five they can draw a rudimentary person, mold figures out of clay or play dough, and paint with broad strokes. Thus, their increasing motor control opens the door to many creative activities.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Physical maturation and motor development continue to prepare the way for intellectual development. Increased motor coordination leads to more careful and detailed examination of objects and the environment in general. Maturation of the brain allows the child to interact with materials for longer because the attention span grows. Increased memory enables the child to recall sequences for longer. Children of three to four can sometimes recall events that occurred a year earlier.

Preschoolers are intellectually curious and actively seeking to learn as much about their world as possible. According to Piaget,[1] the preschooler is in the preoperational stage of development. During this period, the child learns to represent objects, persons, and perceptions with symbols, so the child's thoughts are no longer tied to what is physically present and observable. The most obvious indication of symbolic activity is the development of language. The increase in dreams and nightmares, increasing interest in symbolic play—"These two sticks will be my bow and arrow"—and the beginning of drawing and art are also indications of advances in intellectual abilities.

Questions begin in the preschool years, first about the names of objects and activities, then about why certain routines are necessary. Elkind describes the child's excitement about the mysteries that wait to be explored:

> As one youngster expressed it, "Mommy, why is there such a lot of things in the world if no one knows all these things?" Here the child expresses not only his awe of all there is to be known in the world but also his belief that everything exists for the purpose of being labeled and understood.
>
> In this connection, it is well to remember that to young children parents are all-wise, all-knowing, and all-powerful. The child assumes that every question can be answered and that parents have all the answers. The discovery that parents are fallible can sometimes come as a shock to the child.[2]

During this period the child is also curious about the origins of life and death and about the purpose of various activities: "Where do babies come from?" "Where was I before I was born?" "Do I have to die?" "Why does it rain?" Elkind suggests that, when possible, parents phrase their answers in terms of purpose or function. One can say that the rain falls so trees and flowers grow. Because most phenomena have a purpose, it is not dishonest to answer in these terms.

Although children have enormous curiosity and interest, Piaget believes their concepts are limited, because they pay attention to only a small number of characteristics, usually to sensory features. They do not observe a logical series of operations that can be reversed—this is the preoperational stage. For example, if they see two clay balls of equal size, then observe as one is rolled into a longer, thinner piece, they describe the longer one as bigger even when they have seen that no clay is added. If they see a liquid poured from a short, fat glass into a taller, thinner glass, children say there is more liquid even though they have seen that none has been added. Children in the preoperational stage seem to judge on the basis of the visual perception of changed shape rather than observing that the operations do not include added material.

Preschoolers cannot look at objects and group them into classes on the same logical basis as older children or adults. If they are shown pictures of two kinds of candies—say chocolate candies and yellow candies—and are asked if there are more chocolate candies or more candies, they reply, "More chocolate candies." At this stage they cannot arrange objects according to a particular quality, even though that quality may be very noticeable. For example, they cannot easily arrange several sticks according to the lengths of the sticks, although they can say which of two sticks is longer. They do not easily understand relational terms, such as "darker" or "lighter," unless the objects being compared are very different. They find it hard to identify the darker of two objects when both are light colored, but they can detect the difference between a light and a dark object.

Parents need to keep these differences in mind as they interact with their children. What is obvious and clear to parents as they look at an object or a series of events is not necessarily obvious to their preschool children. Thus, parents must be very specific in telling children how they see an object or event. Remember, too, that although children do not reason in the same logical way as adults, they are sometimes able to grasp intuitively the solution to a problem.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

During the preschool years children continue to enlarge their vocabularies, and their use of language becomes more complex. The child of three puts three or more words together and has a vocabulary of about 900 words. By the age of five, the maturity of the child's language is striking. Children generally speak clearly, but they may have some problems with pronunciation. Stuttering may occur at some point. This is usually temporary and a normal part of development. Vocabulary has increased to more than two thousand words.

A recent study[3] suggests that in language use, three is a pivotal year. At about three, children begin to direct an increasing amount of speech to peers. They express feelings and needs, and they begin to make boasting statements that enhance the ego. For example, they brag about new clothes or new toys. They express an interest in joining others in collaborative ventures. This shift in the function of speech occurs as children are learning to differentiate themselves from others. There is more talk about what "I" have and do. Between four and five, children pay more attention to their relations with peers, and they talk a lot about disagreements with peers and about resolving conflicts. Children progress from preoccupation with their own wants and desires (in the two- to three-year period) to focusing on the self as differentiated from others (at three and four), to focusing on relations with other people (at four and five).

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

With increasing maturity, children have increased control of their behavior and can turn more attention to the outside world and the people in it. The preschooler has a firmly established sense of self as a person, an "I" who thinks, feels, acts, and is ready to interact in a more assertive way with objects in the environment and to initiate activities. In the toddler years, children were interested in finding out about objects. Preschoolers are ready to direct activities. Children reach out and interact with other children in a more reciprocal, responsive fashion. They play with peers for longer, and the play is more cooperative and involves more complex roles for each child.

As children become more aware of what others think and feel and expand their awareness of the world around them, they often develop into little philosophers, questioning all that happens to others as well as to themselves. The diary entries made by the mother of a preschooler illustrate the widening horizons of the child this age, and the increasing interest in the thoughts and experiences of others.

Observations of children's nursery school behavior[4] indicate that the majority of interactions between children are friendly. Children spend a high percentage of time (in this study 81 percent) in friendly encounters that include asking, suggesting, starting an activity with a smile or comment, saying, "Let's do . . ." Only a very small proportion of interactions (14 percent) are of a demanding, aggressive nature, and 5 percent involve whining, begging, and crying. Even when others are domineering, many preschoolers are mature enough to either ignore the response or agree with the other child and thus avoid a conflict. Preschoolers enjoy a friendly atmosphere and tend to return the positive overtures of others. Those children who reach out to others are sought out as companions.

Preschool children are able to engage in altruistic behaviors like helping, sharing, and comforting. While there are not many opportunities for such behavior in day-to-day activities, children can respond when the situation presents itself. For example, see the Mother's Diary entry about the preschooler who decorated a chair and made a throne and a parade for his little sister. Peers serve as models of behavior and also as sources of values. A child may come from nursery school with opinions and concerns that startle the family. One child raised in an agnostic family was set to thinking about religious matters (see Entries from a Mother's Diary). When this kind of thing happens, parents should try to discern the child's understanding of and reaction to what has been said, then give the child their opinions and reactions. This encourages the child to think independently and at the same time provides some guidance.

Recent work[5] suggests that children respond to interactions with moral overtones, and that they are more likely to agree with adult interpretation than with those of peers when moral rights have been violated. Such violations may consist of physical or psychological harm to another or maybe violations of rights. Pre-

BOX 8.1
ENTRIES FROM A MOTHER'S DIARY

Self:

I asked Dick (3-6) something about how he liked Jenny (9 months—his sister) and he said, "I like her a little but not a lot." I said, "Who do I like a lot?" He said, "Daddy?" and I said, "Who else?" He said, "Your own self? I like my own self a lot. Daddy likes him own self a lot. Everyone likes him own self a lot."

Today I was yelling at Dick (4-0) because he made so much noise and was jumping all over the furniture. "I know," he said, "But this morning I dressed myself." He seems to have a balance sheet in his head and balances out his good points and his bad points. Several times I've yelled at him for being mean to Jenny (1-3) but he says, "Yes, but sometimes I'm very nice to her." And this is true.

Tonight Dick (4-0) was sneaking up on Rick, but Rick knew it and turned around as if to jump forward—this was in the dark on the deck—and Dick said, "Don't Daddy. It's me, Dick, your little boy."

Dick (4-1) had Linda over here to play today, and while she was eating lunch, he said with many giggles, "Why do you and Sue Ellen love me so much?" "Well," said Linda, "I'm not going to marry you." Dick got quite serious and said, "You said you were going to marry me." Linda replied she was going to marry Jordy Lane whom Dick has never laid eyes on. "That little kid!" snorted Dick. "I can punch him 'Pow!'" Linda said he was older than Dick—he was four and Dick was three—so I reminded her Dick was four.

Dick said, "Well you promised to marry me when you grew up. You said you wouldn't marry Jack (a common friend.)" Linda shrugged her shoulders and threw up her hands as if she had no alternative and said, "Well, alright." Dick then got back to his original theme—"Why is it, Linda, that you and Sue Ellen love me so much? Is it because I'm strong?" "No," said Linda. "Because I'm a tough girl and you're a tough boy."

Dick (4-2) is preoccupied with whether he's a nice boy and asks me often whether he's been a nice boy that day. This morning he asked me if he were a nice boy yesterday. I said, "Yes." He said, "But why do you yell at me if I'm nice?" I said some of the things he did irritated me, but it didn't mean he wasn't nice. I said Daddy was nice, but I still yelled at him sometimes, but Dick was still kind of puzzled.

Later he was talking about himself, and I said he seemed to be thinking a lot and he said, "I'm always thinking where I am and what I look like."

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Toilet Training:

Last night Dick (3-6) cried out in his sleep. When I went in to see what the matter was, he rolled over and went back to sleep. This morning I asked him if he had a bad dream, and he said, "Yes," he'd seen a bad witch. She turned him into a gold ring and threw him in the oven. Yesterday I read Hansel and Gretel to Amy. Today Dick repeated the dream to Benny (a man in the neighborhood) and to Rick (his father). He recalled it very well. Dick also announced today that he doesn't need to wear diapers at night. He said the same thing yesterday, but tonight we are trying it. Will be curious to see what happens.

Dick did not wet the bed last night. Unfortunately today he got a very bad burn on his right hand. He was walking near the embers of burned trash, fell, and jammed his hands into hot ashes. He cried for about an hour, but after a nap was in excellent shape. His hand has several blisters. He told me he was going to be a big boy. He was going to "sluck" his thumb like a big boy—no more pacifier.

For three nights now Dick has wet the bed, but he's been dry twice and is quite undaunted by his "failures"—he pays no attention to them. When he's dry though, he gets everyone, including Jenny, to feel his pajamas.

(One month later) All by himself Dick has given up wearing diapers at night. For about a month he's gone without them and has wet his bed only occasionally. We have to get him up before we go to bed, but he makes it through even with milk before he goes to sleep.

Siblings:

Jenny (15 months) was fiddling with the dishwasher, and Dick (4-0) said, "Well we just can't have babies here. It's not the place for them." I asked what we should do with her, and he said, "Give her away to someone."

Dick (4-0) commented that when Jenny got bigger she had to get rid of her "Beatle" haircut. He said her hair looked like that of a "Beatle" and in fact she looked like a Beatle.

Today Dick and Jenny were rolling around on the floor and he hugged Jenny and said, "At last I've found a girl I can love." Straight from television dialogue.

Tonight at dinner Dick (4-2) was watching Jenny (1-5) eat and said, "Do you think when Jenny gets to be a big girl, she'll remember what she did as a baby?" I said "No" but was amazed at the question.

Tonight Dick (4-6) was so sweet to Jenny (1-9). He put her in one of the game table chairs that rolled around. First he put a big pillow, then Jenny on top of the pillow with a blanket around her and gave her several spins around the living room. He asked if Jenny needs a barber to trim her bangs because he could do it. When I told him no, he decided to make a parade for Jenny. He decorated the chair with coats and pushed her around saying 'Hooray for Jenny!' She was delighted by all this.

Dreams and Reflections:

Dick (4-1) said today, "You know the reason I'm so smart?" I said, "No," and he said, "I learn everything from my dreams." I asked for an example, and he said he learned all about garages from his dreams. Later he told me he has his dreams only once, and then they go on to someone else. Mrs Jordan (a neighbor) asked him to send his dreams on to her when he was through with them.

Dick (4-2) told me this morning he had two dreams last night. One he was on a farm and a big horse punched him on the ground. The horse could talk and he wanted a wife so Dick got him a horse wife who was a little smarter. The second dream was on a farm, and he had a barn and all the soldiers' horses ran in the barn and he wanted them but the soldiers wanted them so he gave them back. The soldiers gave him two horses and two pigs.

Dick (4-2) in the last few months has become very preoccupied with God. At dinner he announced one night, "There is no God," and when I asked him what made him think that, he replied Sue Ellen told him God was on a cloud, but he looked up and didn't see anything but Mighty Mouse. A few weeks later he asked me if God was in your stomach and I asked him what he meant. He said Sue Ellen told him God was in your heart, and he thought your heart was in your stomach. He got quite curious as to whether God had girl friends, whether he could go up and punch God and was somewhat upset when Sue Ellen said God punished little boys who weren't good or he came and killed them. I said God was very loving, and he said, "Does he got a brother?"—meaning was there a brother who did the bad things for him.

Dick (4-2) said to me, "You know what it means, 'No one lives forever'?" He then proceeded to explain it to me but in a voice so low that I couldn't understand it. He seemed to understand it.

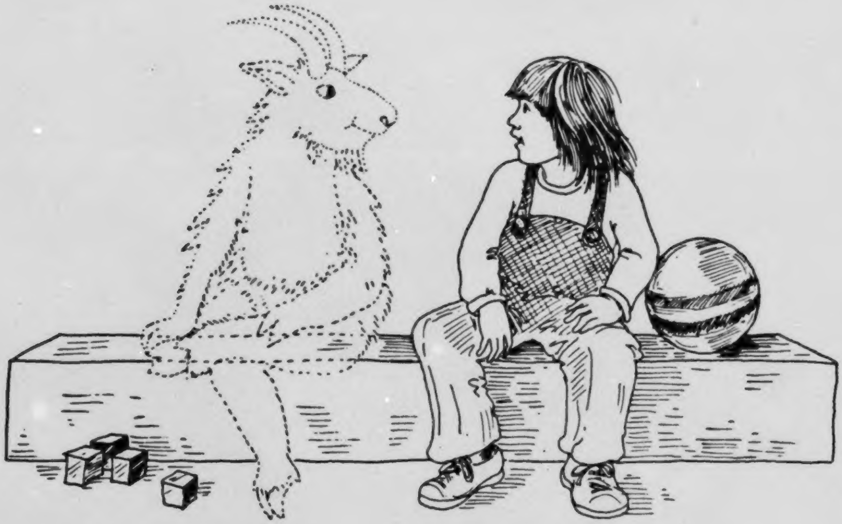
SOURCE: Unpublished Diary, reprinted by permission of the author.

school children seem to be much less attuned than adults to social conventions and rules and most sensitive to the kind of behavioral misdeeds that have a direct effect on them. Children like each other because they enjoy the same activities and play together well.[6] Preschoolers want to enjoy themselves and have fun with a minimum amount of friction. Children who disrupt play and cause trouble are disliked. Children learn aggressive as well as friendly behaviors from each other. Unless an adult intervenes to protect a child, that child is likely, in self-defense, to model the behavior of the aggressive child.

Imaginary companions

What do children do when they do not have access to other children? Many children invent imaginary companions to fill the void. Twenty or thirty years ago there was concern about the psychological stability of children who had such companions. But recent work[7] indicates that children who have imaginary companions are bright, creative, verbal, and more cooperative and aggressive than children who do not. They tend to be active self-initiators in play. These researchers found that only children and firstborn children are most likely to have imaginary companions. Sometimes the companions are given up when a younger sibling is available for play or the child finds friends in kindergarten.

Children tend to play happily with their imaginary friends—sharing and talking with them. Such friends may increase the verbal development of children who have them. While about an equal percentage of boys and girls have imaginary companions, the companions tend to be males. Since companions rarely interfere in play with other children when this is possible, parents have little reason to discourage a child from having imaginary friends. The phenomenon of imaginary companions may be on the rise, if indeed it is, because families are now smaller and



more only children are being raised. The existence of these companions suggests that children have the capacity to generate the kinds of experiences they need for their own development if the environment cannot provide them.

Self-concept

The increasing abilities of children are reflected in the ways they interact with the world of people and objects. And those interactions are among the forces that shape the self-concept of the individual child.

BOX 8.2
FOUR-YEAR-OLDS' SPEECH TO ADULTS AND TWO-YEAR-OLDS

A.M. TO ADULT: You're supposed to put one of these persons in, see? Then one goes with the other little girl. And then the little boy. He's the little boy and he drives. And then they back up. And then the little girl has marbles. . . . (Questions from adult and responses from subject.) And then the little girl falls out and then it goes backwards.

A.M. TO YOUNGER CHILD: Watch, Perry, watch this. He's backing in here. Now he drives up. Look Perry. Look here, Perry. Those are marbles, Perry. Put the men in here. Now I'll do it.

J.K. TO MOTHER ABOUT DUMPING STATION: You put it in here. (Question from mother.) And then push it all the way in, and then you get marbles out here. You'll need gas. It only has enough gas to go to the gas station. It backed in here. That's good. (Question from E.) You have to make it go back up here. Then you pick it up and it goes back in.

J.K. TO YOUNGER CHILD ABOUT DUMPING STATION: I gave you it. You want to have something funny? Put the marbles in here. Put the marbles in here. I'll give you the marbles. Now pour them in here. Go up here. And pour them in here. Now we have to dump it. Dump it. No, not in here. Pour it in here. Pour it in here, okay? That's funny. No, not like that. I'll do it. See, Sara?

A.S. TO ADULT ABOUT ARK: That's the thing that they climb up when the storm. Here are all the animals. There is the little brother, dad-dad, right? Daddy. I want it to be the daddy. . . . (Remark from E. and response to E. by S.) They can't get in from the door, so you have to take this off. Wait, it's backwards. The first ones go in the very back, right? Where's the other giraffe? Here it is. Okay, now the piggies.

A.S. TO YOUNGER CHILD ABOUT ARK: This is a black bird. You get the black bird. I get the white bird . . . . Don't put that in yet. Don't put that in there. They need some space. Now you put your giraffe in. Oh, I got both of the giraffes. No, don't. Don't put that there. This here. And I put mine here.

SOURCE: Shatz, Marilyn and Gelman, Rochel, "The Development of Communication Skills: Modification in the Speech of Young Children as a Function of Listener," *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development* 38 (1973): Whole Number 152, pp. 9 and 13.

The child's first words and word combinations focus on actor and act. Throughout the preschool years children define themselves in terms of what they do and what they have—"I help Mommy" and "I have a doggie." They believe that all actions, their own and those of others, are intentional and within the actor's control. For these children there are no accidents or acts of nature beyond their control. Parents need to keep in mind this insistence on intentionality. It is this belief that she is responsible for action that sometimes causes a preschooler to take the blame for what is, in reality, an accident. And conversely, a preschooler is likely to attribute, often inaccurately, great significance to parents' accidental behaviors.

For many years, psychologists relying on Piaget's theory thought preschoolers incapable of understanding another person's viewpoint. Psychologists thought children assumed that everyone else looks at the world just the way they do. The work of Rochel Gelman[8] (see box) indicates that preschoolers do understand that adults and other children respond to the world differently, and that preschoolers adapt their behavior accordingly. For example, a preschool child may change her speech patterns to suit the age of the person to whom she is talking.

The preschooler's comprehension of basic moral rules of interpersonal interaction is similar to that of adults. Maria Montessori[9] describes an event in school that illustrates children's concern for others. The class had been discussing the awful effects of an earthquake in Sicily. A five-year-old boy got out of his seat, walked to the blackboard, and began to write, "I am sorry." She expected him to add, "For what happened," but instead, he continued, "I am sorry that I am small. If I were big, I would go to help."

Sexual identity

Just as children are beginning to feel competent and effective, they experience an inevitable failure that may leave them with what Freud termed "a permanent injury to self-regard." He referred to the Oedipal complex or, as Dodson calls it, "the family romance," and its outcome of failure. Freud describes the child's desire to be romantically involved with the parent of the opposite sex—to marry that parent, to have children. The child's affection for that parent is mixed with tenderness, jealousy, and longing for intimate contact. Adults are often surprised by the flirtatiousness of a preschool girl who can be coy and charming, or by a boy that age who can be protective and seductive with his mother.

While this love flourishes, the preschoolers feel very competitive with the same-sex parent. These children want to surpass and outperform the adult, and they talk a lot about how grown-up they are. At the same time, children feel enormous rage and anger at this parent for standing in the way of their wishes for intimacy with the opposite-sex parent. When these impulses are at a peak, the child may cheerfully wish the parent dead and feel very guilty about this hostility. Later, he may seek reassurances that the same-sex parent has not been a victim of his aggressive fantasies. If the parent gets ill or suffers some serious damage during this time in the child's life, the child may feel guilt and that feeling may remain with him indefinitely.

Parents may be amazed at their own emotional reactions to a child's seductiveness. When a mother has been home alone all day coping with the chores, or comes home from her job feeling tired and her husband comes home tired and uninterested in the details of her life, the mother may find herself responding warmly to the soft little arms around her neck and the soft little kisses meant to cheer her up. Similarly, a father may feel very guilty about his response to the seductiveness of his little girl, who gives affection so freely and lavishly and asks little in return.

Instinctively, the parents may push the loving preschooler away and become cold and aloof, afraid to acknowledge their own feelings. When this happens, the child feels rejected and worries that he or she has done something wrong. These feelings of rejection, inadequacy, and guilt at having caused the rejection can last far into adulthood. Conversely, the parent may respond positively to these overtures and keep the child bound to him or her in a relationship that is too close and hampers the child's development. This close, highly charged relationship, with parent and child overly dependent on each other for gratifications that are more appropriately obtained elsewhere, can set the pattern for the child's relationships with peers for many years. While the Oedipal relationship flourishes in the preschool period, both boys and girls worry about the reaction of the same-sex parent. The child fears that the parent will respond, perhaps with a harmful physical act, to the child's sexual impulses and aggressive fantasies. These fears are reflected in the youngster's worries about bodily harm and fantasies about monsters.

Eventually the child deals with this anxiety by giving up the opposite-sex parent as love object and identifying with the same-sex parent as a model. As the child tries to take on the behaviors of the same-sex adult, the moral conscience and the commands of society become internalized in the form of what Freud calls the superego. The internalizing of moral commands, so that the child directs his or her behavior along socially approved paths without the intervention of outside forces, ushers in the latency period when sexual thoughts are less prominent. However, the loss of the opposite-sex parent is a bitter disappointment. If the reaction is strong, children may come to feel they can do nothing worthwhile.

PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES

Now let's turn to some of the behavioral problems that can arise and different strategies for handling them. We shall discuss problems related to physiological functioning—sleeping, eating, excessive masturbation, and hyperactivity, and then problems related to interactions with others and the world at large—sibling rivalry, excessive dependency, aggressiveness, and fears.

Eating

We have all heard it said that "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach." Food is important. We enjoy it, are nourished by it, and cannot live without it. Mealtime is doubly important—it is both a time when we eat and a time when family members are together and have a chance to talk and laugh and enjoy each other.

Yet rare is the child who does not, at some time, have some eating problems. Most often children refuse to eat particular foods and then snack later on. Ginott encourages parents to use the eating situation to provide children with choices. The child who is given choices—between scrambled eggs and boiled eggs, between milk or orange juice, between hot and cold cereal—has less reason to refuse to eat. This less authoritarian approach gives the child some power over his life and encourages him to take responsibility for himself. Ginott suggests that most food problems occur when a mother tries to get her child to eat more than the child needs to be well nourished. Provide a reasonable amount of healthy food, and the child has the responsibility to eat.

Gordon suggests that parents use active listening and mutual problem-solving when dealing with eating problems. Sometimes when a child demands a food that parents cannot or will not give (for example, a piece of pie just before dinner), he really is upset about something else. The request for food may be a request for attention or affection. If the parent senses this and can get the child to talk about what is bothering him, what seemed like an unreasonable request may be forgotten as the child's real need is taken care of. When a child refuses to eat what he needs, like vegetables, Gordon advises that parent and child sit down and figure out how the problem can be resolved. One little boy agreed that if his mother gave him vegetables that he liked he would be happy to eat them. Then they made a list of the child's favorite vegetables, and both felt the problem had been solved.

Dreikurs, like Ginott, urges parents to be detached about children's eating. Children are presented with healthy amounts of food at meals and permitted to eat what they like. At the end of dinner, the plate is removed, and no other food is served until the next meal. If the meal is dinner and the child must wait until morning, that is acceptable. In a few days children learn that all the food they get is served at mealtime and the problem is solved.

Dreikurs recognizes that this procedure is difficult for parents to follow. Hunger pangs are thought to be painful. Dreikurs says he is always surprised that parents who would not hesitate to spank a child, recoil in horror at the idea of allowing the child to go to bed hungry. He believes that parents are more concerned about power than about food. They want the child to do as they say, and it is that control that the child fights. When parents do not exert power, children eat.

The behaviorists recommend rewards to encourage good eating habits. When children have difficulty finishing their meals, parents tell them they can have dessert after they have finished what is on their plates. If children do not drop food on the floor or on themselves, they are given rewards to encourage neat eating habits. Eimers and Aitchison advise parents to use praise. If a child is eating very little but is praised for that, eating becomes pleasurable. Praise and attention for eating will reward, and so increase, eating.

Eating is the child's responsibility. Gordon is active in modifying the situation so that the child will want to eat. Ginott and Dreikurs take a detached view. Behaviorists use praise and rewards. Both Gordon and Ginott, and Dreikurs to some extent, offer the child choices.

Sleeping problems can take many forms. Children may be reluctant to go to bed and use a variety of delaying tactics. They may wake up during the night with nightmares. Or they may get up during the night or early in the morning and climb into the parents' bed. Sleep problems can be associated with fears—fear of the dark, or fears of monsters and creatures—that cause nightmares, and they can also be related to desires to be with the opposite-sex parent and may interfere with closeness between the parents.

What do you do when a child consistently resists going to bed? First, parents can examine whether a child really needs as much sleep as parents think is necessary. Individual differences in need for sleep are great; some children over three do well with as little as eight hours sleep at night, and others require twelve or more. If a child is not irritable or cranky at dinner, she is probably getting enough sleep—even if she is sleeping fewer hours at night or skipping her nap.

Parents who decide that a child needs a certain amount of sleep can establish a bedtime routine to help the child adjust to going to bed. The child who has a routine knows that after a bath, some bedtime stories, a drink of water or milk, and a trip to the bathroom, she is going to be tucked in bed. Since most children do not fall asleep immediately, they must learn to rest quietly until they drop off.

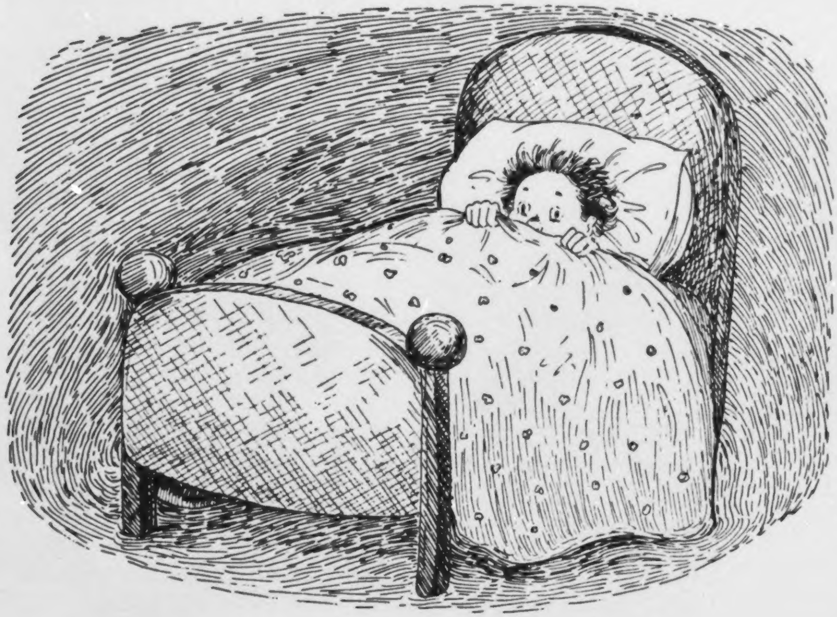
Ginott[10] advises parents to take advantage of the child's desire for conversation and attention at bedtime. Those few minutes each night can be quiet times when parent and child can share feelings and experiences. When a child asks for a drink of water, parents may respond. But repeated calls for mother can be answered this way: "I know you wish I could be with you longer. But now is my time for father." Gordon,[11] too, recommends that when children delay, parents should send a complete I-message that tells the child what is not acceptable and why. Gordon tells of the mother who reported that her daughter was cranky, crying and refusing to lie down and go to sleep. The mother tried reasoning, insisting, ordering, spanking. Nothing worked until she sent an I-message that she wanted to spend time with her husband and that this was the only time they had to relax and talk. The mother explained they could not enjoy themselves and get some rest with all the crying. To her amazement, her daughter stopped the crying immediately, even though she did not fall asleep quickly.

Dreikurs[12] recommends a system in which parents establish a regular bedtime routine, and then ignore the child after he is put to bed. Four-year-old Harry extended the process of going to bed for an hour or more each night—he splashed in the tub or wanted to finish a play activity or asked for many drinks of water. Mother lost her temper and spanked him, and then the father yelled at both mother and child. Dreikurs suggests that, since Harry's goal was power, the parents had to withdraw from the conflict. Harry was told that he was to have a new bedtime routine—bath at 7:30 P.M., then bed at 8:00 P.M. "After that we will no longer be concerned with what you do." At 7:30 P.M., Harry did not want to come for his bath because he was playing. At 8:00 P.M. both parents went to Harry's room. They tucked him in bed, without his sleepers, hugged him, and said good night. Harry yelled that he had not had his bath, and he got out of bed to ask for a bath and help with his sleepers. His parents ignored him, and no matter what he did—

and he screamed and yelled and stomped his feet—his parents acted as though he wasn't there. Finally, Harry returned to his room and climbed into bed with his sleepers half on and cried himself to sleep. Dreikurs predicted that within a week, Harry would go to bed at 8:00 P.M.

Behaviorists solve the problem by setting up a regular routine, but when children try to get up again, Eimers and Aitchison[13] suggest mild social disapproval, followed by a punishment. If children get out of bed, they are to go to bed fifteen minutes earlier the next night. Alternatively, rewards for going to bed promptly can be given. All strategists agree that children need a pleasant, quieting routine before bedtime, so they are calm and fall asleep easily.

Bedtime problems are frequently associated with fears. Gordon recommends active listening to determine whether fears or other problems underlie the sleep problem. After the child communicates what is bothering her, mutual problem-solving can be used. Dick's parents used mutual problem-solving when their preschooler woke up at 3:30 A.M. and climbed into their bed. At first he said he came in because he didn't like his bed. But the parents knew he had loved his bed. Finally Dick said that the problem was that his baby brother woke him up. The parents explained it was too crowded for the three of them to sleep in the bed and asked Dick for solutions. He suggested that the baby be moved to a distant part of the house or that he, Dick, be allowed to sleep on the floor in the parents' bedroom. Neither of these solutions was acceptable to the parents. They explained this to Dick and told him he could sleep in the guest room until the baby was older. Once



the baby began to sleep through the night, the older boy was moved back to the children's bedroom.

Krumboltz and Krumboltz[14] suggest a system very similar to Gordon's for handling a child who is afraid to go to bed. Essentially, the mother does Active Listening, discovers the problem, and reassures the child. They tell of a mother whose preschool son was afraid to go to bed. The mother talked with him and learned that he was afraid of ghosts who made weird noises in his room. She listened, and heard noises too, but realized they were made by leaves brushing against the side of the house. The child's father showed him how the noises were made. The child was reassured, and lost his fear of going to bed. The parents identified the specific source of the behavior, and helped the child to see that his fear was based on a misconception.

When fear becomes associated with bedtime and children insist on night lights or having the door open, Krumboltz and Krumboltz suggest that the parent help the child become accustomed to the dark. Parent and child can play games in an almost dark room or take walks at dusk in a familiar outdoor area—through a park or along a beach—so the child associates pleasure with the dark. These authors say that the parent should not (1) leave the child alone in the dark, or (2) permit the child to have a night light, and so prevent her from experiencing the dark. Dreikurs suggests doing both. He recommends being detached and unaffected by a child's fears in order to give the child confidence that she can master the situation. The mother can leave the hall light on and the door slightly open. Then she should not react to the child's fear. Instead she should give encouragement, saying the child will soon handle her fears. The mother should ignore crying. When children have a real need of parents at night, as in the case of illness, parents should respond. When the need becomes a whim, parents should not give in.

How can parents decide what to do? All strategies strive to develop a child who is free of fear and who sleeps without disturbance. All techniques require time and patience over an extended period. The child is given emotional support, and parents' needs are respected so that children's demands do not become burdensome. Gordon's system gives the child an active role in choosing a solution. Dreikurs and the behaviorists give the child an active role in conquering the fears.

Nighttime wetting

Nighttime wetting is more common among boys than girls, because the nervous system of boys matures more slowly. Gordon recommends I-messages and mutual problem-solving; parents can present their reactions to the night wetting—saying that they do not like to get up and change sheets, that they don't like doing the extra laundry—and ask the child how he thinks they could help solve the problem. The child might volunteer not to drink liquids after dinner, go to the bathroom just before bed, and if he wets the bed, wait until morning to have clean sheets.

Dreikurs suggests a detached attitude toward such undesirable habits as thumb-sucking, nail-biting, and night wetting. Often the child who does these things believes he or she cannot control the unacceptable behavior. Parents must give encouragement yet remain unconcerned about the outcome. Scolding and punishment do not seem to help, and Dreikurs advises parents to turn the problem over to the child.

Behaviorists suggest that wetting can be controlled with rewards—a gold star each time the child stays dry all night, and a special treat when so many gold stars have been earned. Some parents may want to substitute praise for material rewards. Two behavioral psychologists report a new program for helping bedwetters. Kimmel and Kimmel[16] believe that children wet their beds because their bladders are not large enough to hold the urine that accumulates during the night. And so they suggest gradually increasing the size of the bladder. During the day, when the child says he needs to go to the bathroom, the parent says, "Now try to hold it for five minutes before you go to the bathroom." If the child cannot tell time, a timer can be used. When the child can wait for five minutes, the time is increased to ten minutes, then fifteen. This program increases the capacity of the bladder until the child is able to stay dry at night. The child can be encouraged to drink fluids during the day, so there is an opportunity to practice, and parents can give rewards each time the child is dry in the morning.

Excessive masturbation

For many years parents discouraged masturbation with threats that it would lead to insanity, illness, and other dire consequences. Physicians and mental health professionals now consider masturbation a natural occurrence that has no harmful physical effects. However, the ways in which parents handle the child's masturbation can help either to prevent or to produce harmful psychological effects.

Frances Ilg and Louise Ames[17] describe two possible responses. First, parents can punish the child and prohibit the activity. Second, they can ignore the masturbation. If it is excessive, parents can try to find out whether the child is unhappy or tense and can help the child deal with any underlying source of anxiety. If parents punish and criticize the child, the child may come to feel he is evil for having sexual feelings. This can lead to difficulties at later ages, when the child may be unable to enjoy even approved sexual activity. In addition, the child may feel so guilty that he cannot discuss any sexual activity or feelings with parents, even if he needs help—for example, with infection or pregnancy.

Ginott is concerned only with prolonged masturbation, because it prevents children from seeking pleasure in other ways. Children who masturbate excessively may be reluctant to seek friends or to play in the neighborhood. Like Ilg and Ames, Ginott recommends looking for possible sources of tension in the child's life and correcting them. When children feel loved and have opportunities to explore the world and achieve their goals, sexual self-stimulation will not be the main source of satisfaction.

Dreikurs believes that excessive masturbation results from not being part of a social group. However, if parents try to force children to stop masturbating, children may only become more resistant. Dreikurs recommends providing many opportunities for activities and feelings of competence.

Benjamin Spock[18] says he has no moral objection to masturbation, but he does not want the child to masturbate in public view. He advises what he terms gentle inhibition. Spock suggests that the parent should not frighten the child, but should say that masturbation is not polite or approved in general company. Masturbation should be done privately. Like other professionals, Spock believes that encouraging other activities is enough to end the problem.

Hyperactivity

As the brain develops from birth to age three, the child's motor activity increases. From age three to nine, as the brain matures, the attention span increases, focusing improves, and motor activity decreases. The inability to inhibit motor behavior is, perhaps, the biggest single behavior problem in boys, and often is identified as a problem in the preschool years. The child may always have been active. But when the great interest in activity continues after mastery is achieved in the toddler period, and is accompanied by such other qualities as excessive restlessness, short attention span, and demanding behavior that permits no delay in gratification, hyperactivity may be the cause. Dorothea Ross and Sheila Ross[19] describe hyperactivity as "a consistently high level of activity that is manifested in situations where it is clearly inappropriate, and is coupled with an inability to inhibit activity on command."

What is the significance of hyperactivity at the preschool period? Evidence suggests that preschool hyperactivity is a problem that will remain stable and has many ramifications, most of them negative, for boys unless action is taken to help these children. Recent research[20] reveals that hyperactive three-year-olds are still considered hyperactive at seven-and-a-half. Further, preschool hyperactivity has been related to emotional excitability, poor motor coordination, and poor performance on intellectual tests at age seven-and-a-half. Inability to control motor behavior during the preschool period may make attention to cognitive tasks and involvement in them very difficult, and thus may pave the way for later school problems. Longitudinal data[21] indicate that hyperactive preschool boys are likely to be competitive, sexually active men who lack intellectual interests. Hyperactivity in girls was not as predictive of adult qualities.

What can parents do? Remember that hyperactive children are easily stimulated by events. Parents can establish structure and daily routines in which the child can take an active role and can put to constructive use the high energy level that can otherwise be disrupting. The structure need not be rigid, but a general schedule of many daily activities will help a child be able to participate. If, for example, the child has a simple breakfast that he or she can help fix—cereal, juice, toast—confidence and independence are encouraged, energy is consumed, and structure is accepted. The old saying "a place for everything and everything in its place"—especially toys and clothes—can be used to help a child participate in creating order in his life while using up excess energy. Parents can provide a chest or boxes for toys and child-height hooks and shelves for clothes.

Donald Meichenbaum and Joseph Goodman[22] have found that impulsive children can be taught to guide their behavior and achieve greater control by using a form of self-instruction. Parents show the child what they want done and at the same time talk about what they are doing. The child then acts and talks out loud to describe the actions—"First I take off my pajamas, then I hang them up, then I put on my shirt and pants." In a third step, the child can internalize these instructions and repeat the words silently. Since hyperactive boys like to be busy much of the time, fathers can be especially important figures in modeling this sequnce of "say, then do" as they spend time with their hyperactive sons.

Behaviorists Eimers and Aitchison advise parents to be alert and consistent in providing rewards for positive behaviors. Hyperactive children often feel rewarded by the attention they receive for misdeeds. "Try to catch the child being good," they suggest and give rewards of praise and social approval. These seem to be more important to hyperactive children than material rewards.

Family rules should be simple, clear, and enforceable. When rules are broken, parents can use mild social disapproval delivered quickly. Each task the child is expected to perform should be broken down into simple easy steps that can be rewarded promptly. Putting toys away, dressing, helping to get meals—these can be divided into easy steps and rewarded with praise and social approval. For example, to teach a child to put on a shirt, L. Eugene Arnold[23] suggests the following sequence: "Put this hand in this sleeve. Good! Now put the other hand in that sleeve. Good! Put your head in this hole. Good! Now pull it down over your body. Good! You've put your own shirt on!"

To increase attention span, Eimers and Aitchison recommend helping children with puzzles and other games that require concentration. They urge parents to praise the child for completion of the task rather than for correctness. Children should have a place where they can play without distractions. Gradually children are able to work at increasingly difficult games for longer periods of time.

Hyperactive children who are poorly coordinated benefit from opportunities to practice physical skills. Games that involve running, balancing, and gymnastic movements are helpful. Drawing and playing with Legos or other construction toys are activities that facilitate development of fine motor coordination. Parents can stimulate interest by giving genuine praise for what the child does and with material rewards of food or other treats.

Because the hyperactive child is more difficult to live with, more likely to get in trouble and to receive social disapproval, parents must try to prevent the development of a poor self-concept—"I can't do anything right" "Nobody wants me around"—or a self-concept that reflects special privileges—"I am too much for anyone to handle" "I'm so active I don't have to go by the usual rules." Parents can point out to children that it is hard to have such a lot of energy without being able to control and enjoy it. When children harness their energy, they can accomplish a lot. The child who is rewarded for the things he does well, and is given specific comments about behaviors that need changing, can learn to deal with his high activity level.

Sibling rivalry

In the last chapter, we examined problems that occur when a younger sibling is born. The older child feels jealousy and anger, as well as caring, warmth, and protectiveness. As children grow, and are both mobile and verbal, new kinds of problems arise.

Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish[24] apply Ginott's principles to sibling rivalry and suggest that parents consider themselves negotiators in these situations. They can recognize that each child's feelings are unique and justified, and can accept the feelings without necessarily approving them. Parents need not feel they must settle the differences as long as neither child is in danger. A parent can always interrupt and say, "Hitting doesn't solve problems." If that fails to stop physical aggression, parents can step in and calmly separate the children.

Gordon advocates use of active listening. This enables children to express their feelings and grants them freedom to resolve differences. When children listen actively to each other, a climate is created in which children can work out their own problems. One mother whose children were four, six, and eight found that the children, including the four-year-old, were able to devise rules that decreased fighting and name calling. The children were upset by verbal insults and decided they would try to send I-messages. If the situation became too heated, they would go to their rooms to cool off.

Dreikurs considers sibling rivalry in detail. He believes that parents can reduce the jealousy between children by making it clear to all that each child in the family is loved for his or her individual qualities and that it is not important whether one child does something better than another. Parents love each child. But a child's trust of that love can be diminished when parents use one sibling's behavior to humiliate another child—"Why can't you be more like Jimmy—he ate everything on his plate."

A fight is often an attempt to get a parent's attention and can be ignored. Parents may fear that a younger child will be hurt, but often children threaten violence to attract mother's attention. Dreikurs reported an incident in which a four-year-old girl seemed to be about to close the door on her little brother as he came through it. The mother was upset and dashed up to help the little boy. However, Dreikurs noted that the little girl was very careful to shut the door without pinching her little brother's fingers. If the mother had been observant, she would have realized that the girl's desire was to get attention and the hug that would follow the scolding.

Dreikurs recommends treating all children the same when siblings bicker or fight. They are all sent to their rooms if play becomes noisy. If one child complains about another, parents can react so that children feel a responsibility to live in peace. Parents can point out that a child who acts up today may only be trying to retaliate for an incident that happened yesterday. Misbehavior involves all childen in the family, and they can learn to take care of each other. Cooperation can be fostered by taking children on family expeditions and having all the children play together. When they see that life is more fun when they cooperate and get along with each other, children learn to settle their differences.

Behaviorists also suggest that parents withdraw from the sibling fights, but substitute rewards for cooperation as a way to increase positive interactions. Children will blossom when they hear praise for their good points. Once a fight occurs, however, parents are encouraged to say as little as possible and to offer a reward for good behavior.

Aggression

Aggression has been defined as "an attitude of attack, as contrasted with passive withdrawal, which may or may not possess an element of hostility."[25] Children become aggressive for many reasons and express their feelings in several ways. If someone—an adult, a sibling, or a peer—interferes with a child's routine, takes a possession or toy, or forces an activity on a preschooler, the child may respond aggressively. The response may be physical—yanking the possession back, hitting the intruder—but a preschooler is most likely to respond with verbal insults, taunts, or threats.

Parents can accept aggressive feelings but not hitting or hurting others. Ginott suggests such comments as, "People are not for hitting; pillows are for hitting."

Gordon recommends active listening, as used in the following incident. Mary, a friend of four-year-old Tim, came to visit for an afternoon. Tim became angry and started a lot of fights with Mary. Tim's mother tried hard not to blame Tim or to call him a bad boy. Af first she responded to his anger by saying "Mary doesn't like it when you hurt her," and then "I can't have you hitting other children." Nothing worked until the mother tried active listening in a effort to understand her son's anger. She asked Tim whether he thought she was paying too much attention to Mary. He answered that he thought she loved Mary more.

Because Tim was young, his mother had to take an active role in supplying some of the possible feelings Tim might have. After Tim said he felt unloved, his mother explained that Tim was special to her and daddy, and Mary was special to her parents. Tim then began to settle down and talk about his special friends. If fighting continues after active listening, that approach has not worked. Parents should send I-messages saying they do not like the fighting and then withdraw if there is no danger to the children.

Dreikurs talks about the different meanings that aggression can have for children. One aggressive child may be motivated by a desire for attention, another may want power or revenge, a third may be feeling inadequate. If parents can get the child to talk about how she is feeling, the parent and child can work together to resolve the difficulty. Dreikurs urges parents to focus on the purpose of the behavior, on what it will get the child (attention, power, revenge) not on the causes (jealousy, lack of confidence, or a feeling of being neglected).

The behaviorists have a variety of responses to aggressiveness. If children talk about fighting with peers, parents can remind them of the consequences of such fights. The child may then try to avoid those consequences. If fighting is occurring, parents can separate children and perhaps send them to separate rooms for a while. And parents can reward children when they are playing happily and cooperatively with other children.

Ginott describes dependency in children as the result of overprotective parents. Such parents think of the child as a possession. They feed and dress the child and hover over the child long after other children are encouraged to take care of themselves. Overprotected children do not have a chance to grow and get to a sense of who they are and what they want. Such children are caught in a bind. They have had little experience caring for themselves and so they are afraid to try. As a result, they continue to be dependent on the parent who fosters dependency. A vicious cycle is set up, and parents need professional help if the dependency is too great.

There is no hard and fast rule for determining whether you, as a parent, are encouraging dependency. You must observe your own behavior to see whether you do things for the child that he or she could do alone. Do you rush to put on a sweater when the child could do it herself? Do you discourage the child from trying something new, like helping with the dishes, because you can do it faster? Do you refuse to let the child go play with a friend for a day because he is too young to be away that long?

It can be hard to know whether you are being appropriately careful or overprotective. Children mature at different rates, and there is no one age at which all children can do things independently. Look around at other children the same age. If they are all doing more for themselves than your child, perhaps you are delaying your child's independence.

If you decide you are overprotective, try to figure out why and change your behavior accordingly. Do you do it to save time? It does take longer for a child who is learning a skill to perform that skill unaided. But in the long run, time spent teaching and helping the skill to develop will save time later, when the child can do it alone. Are you fearful that something might happen if the child acts alone? Is your fear realistic? Can the child really hurt himself? Are you worried because what the child does is not perfect? For example, if a child goes out with a sweater buttoned crookedly, he will look a little disorganized but he won't catch pneumonia. Sometimes parents are overprotective because the child's dependence gives them a sense of importance. Parents are encouraged to have independent interests and pursuits precisely to avoid this problem. If a parent cannot determine the reason and such dependency continues, professional counseling is desirable.

To cope with the usual problems that children have in mastering skills, Ginott recommends waiting patiently and making a calm comment that recognizes the difficulty—"It is hard to button your coat." Once such a comment is given, it makes no difference whether the child succeeds or fails. If she succeeds, she knows she has accomplished a difficult task, and if she fails, she knows the parent understands that it was hard.

Ginott says that one of the most important goals is to help children separate from parents. One measure of parental willingness to let children grow is the number of things we do not do for them. In their eagerness to help children, parents often make them feel helpless and inadequate in a variety of ways—"Here, let me do it" or "I've picked out your clothes for you." Children get the erroneous message that they are helpless and need their parents in order to survive. Ginott encourages parents to permit children to get help from other adults—teachers, dentists, doctors, camp counselors. Ask yourself: "In this situation who can be most helpful with my child—the shoe salesman, school teacher, pediatrician."

Gordon states that when parents rely on solutions that draw on parental power to force children to conform, children in the early years give in because the risks of rebellion are too great. They become obedient, fearful, but also passive, and deny their own feelings. When adolescence comes and they feel they have more power, children frequently rebel with a vengeance, even though they are less mature than other children who have had more responsibilities. When the no-lose problem-solving method is used, parent and child must together solve the problem. During this process children develop thinking skills and a sense of competence that carries over to other situations. With young children, parents may have to suggest many alternatives. But children can select acceptable answers, and gradually they learn to develop ideas.

Dreikurs describes varying degrees of dependent behavior. At one extreme is the child who seeks attention by asking repeatedly for help with skills already mastered. At the other is the child who has become so discouraged that he or she has mastered few skills and feels constantly inadequate and helpless. The remedy is to "never do for a child what he can do for himself." Like Ginott, Dreikurs gives examples of the overprotective mother who did everything for the child so she could do nothing for herself. The parent's effort does not serve the child, who is handicapped by the parent's attention but instead serves the parent, who needs to demonstrate competence or is looking for meaning in his or her own life.

Behaviorists advocate reward for increasingly independent behaviors. Eimers and Aitchison describe the case of Randy, three-and-a-half, who was so tied to his mother that he refused to be out of her sight for more than a few minutes at a time. Initially, his mother had been pleased that Randy was so attached to her and liked being her little helper. However, she soon realized that Randy was not at all interested in playing with other children. And her concern turned to worry when no amount of encouragement would get him away from her for more than a few minutes.

The mother handled the problem by rewarding her son for increasing his distance from her. At first she rewarded him with praise and social approval for staying in the next room for five minutes, then for ten minutes. She gradually increased the amount of time and the distance he was away. Soon she worked upstairs and he played downstairs. To get him out of the house and playing with others, she invited one child in to play, provided special food and games. She increased the number of children. One day, they invited him to play outside and he went along. At all stages, Randy's mother gave him praise, attention, and rewards. With time he found that playing with friends was more fun than being with his mother, and the play itself was the reward.

The strategists agree about the cause of dependency—the parent's desire to be too involved in the child's activities. Ginott, Gordon, and Dreikurs all urge parents to stand back and let children take care of themselves. The behaviorists recommend rewarding independent behaviors until these become self-perpetuating. Parents who use this approach are active initially, but they soon stand back as the children become independent.

Research by David Harrington, Jeanne Block, and Jack Block[26] reveals that children who are dependent and indecisive as preschoolers may continue on this path into elementary school. Timid, tense boys have greater difficulty with intellectual problems. Anxious, inhibited girls have difficulties in interpersonal relations and are likely to give in to others.

What can parents do to promote curiosity, creativity, and independence in their children? Give positive support of the child's exploratory behavior. Have and communicate confidence that what the child does or makes is valuable and worth attention, even if it is not perfect. Encourage the child's involvement in activities, and encourage the child to persist in her activity until she achieves her goal.

Fears

Fears are a natural part of life as children grow up. In the early years of infancy, fears of noise, of loss of support, and of strangers are most evident, but these gradually fade. In the preschool years children experience fears of animals, of the dark, of harm from imaginary creatures, and of natural disasters like fires and storms. Realistic concerns about dangers like falling out of a tree and hurting oneself can motivate the child to be cautious when that is appropriate. However, fears can be harmful if they are intense and prevent the child from exploring the world and interacting with other people. Research[27] suggests, further, that intense fears at this time have long-term impact—preschool boys who experienced intense fears of bodily harm were, as adults, anxious about sexuality, uninvolved with traditional masculine activities, and concerned with intellectual performance.

How can parents minimize the number of fears a child has? Some parents are sarcastic and critical, make fun of fears, or ridicule or punish the child. These tactics do not decrease the child's fears. They do diminish the child's self-esteem and make her more vulnerable. A model of confident, nonfearful behavior helps a child to handle fears. The model can either be a parent or another child who is not fearful. Learning of nonfearful behavior occurs most easily in a happy atmosphere. An explanation of a frightening event—of a thunderstorm, for example—helps the child to understand what is happening and so helps to dispel the child's fear.

A newborn who is welcomed into a family that already includes a dog—even a Saint Bernard—will grow up unafraid of animals, which are an accepted part of his environment. If a child is afraid of animals, this fear can be overcome by exposing the child first to small, distant animals and gradually to closer, large animals. Visits to pet stores and later to a zoo can be fun and beneficial in dealing with fear. Eventually the child will be ready to play in a room where there is a small, friendly dog. And that experience will give the child a sense of control and confidence.

Many psychologists believe that the child's greatest fear is fear of abandonment by parents. Parents should never threaten, even playfully, to leave a child. Parents sometimes are tempted, especially when out shopping, to tell the children that if they don't hurry they will be left behind. Ginott recommends against such statements because they "fan the flames" of the fantasy of being abandoned. If a parent must go away —for example, to the hospital or on a business trip—children should be prepared well in advance of the separation.

Doll play can be used very effectively to prepare a child for a parent's absence. The child and the parent who is going away, using dolls to take their roles, can enact the time of separation, the period of absence, and the parent's return. Tape recorded messages from the parent for the child to listen to during the absence, and pictures of the absent parent, are also helpful.

The parent who makes careful preparation for even a short absence only to find that the child cries or is disconsolate anyway may find it wise to examine his feelings about being away from the child. Sometimes children seem to have built-in radar that makes them remarkably sensitive to even the unspoken feelings of those who are close to them. The child of an anxious parent may sense that anxiety and respond in kind.

Dreikurs considers separation anxiety the child's attempt to control the parent. He believes the best course is to ignore the fear. Parents must provide children with affection, love, and concern, but must not respond to fears. Because the fears often stem from feelings of helplessness, parents are encouraged to find opportunities for children to be more self-reliant and to win approval by cooperating with others.

Behaviorists handle separation fears and crying by finding ways of not reinforcing such behavior. They suggest that the mother should not stay home, because that rewards the crying. A parent should have a substitute caretaker whom she trusts. Then she should leave and let the child settle down. To help the child adjust to babysitters, Becker[28] recommends that the mother leave for brief periods at first, gradually staying away for longer periods of time.

To reduce and eliminate fears, the behaviorists Eimers and Aitchison recommend that parents remain calm when the child is afraid and handle one specific fear at a time. Select a specific fear, like fear of dogs, to work on, even if the child has many. As one fear decreases, others may also, and a child can usually only deal with one problem at a time. Make gradual progress in small steps; do not arrange dramatic encounters with the feared object.

Having the child observe other children, particularly friends, interact with the feared object or situation also helps to reduce fears. Give praise and social approval for every approach to the feared object. Ignore statements about the fears, because that attention can be a reward. Instead, reward all positive statements the child makes that indicate ability to handle the situation.

As children grow and perceive and experience more in life, they become aware of the many possible dangers that exist. Fears are a result of increasing awareness that there are dangers that must be guarded against. Mild fears and caution in new situations are useful and protective for the child so he will not charge into potentially dangerous situations. When these fears occur, as they do in the preschool years, accept them as signs of the child's increasing maturity. Showing the child how to cope with fear and overcome it increases the child's competence and self-confidence.

Four tasks are handled in this period: (1) mastery of self, (2) developing initiative, (3) attachment to the opposite-sex parent, and (4) preference for the same-sex parent.[29] To help children master themselves and their environment, parents can provide aids to successful experiences—clothes children can put on themselves, stools to help them reach light switches and sinks, low hooks and shelves in closets for clothes and toys, plastic dishes so children can set and clear the table, and space for running and jumping to develop coordination.

As in earlier stages, intellectual development is stimulated by carefully chosen toys and new experiences. The following are useful toys for preschoolers: (1) large, smooth, hardwood blocks of different sizes and shapes; (2) crayons, felt pens, and finger paints to encourage creative arts; (3) musical equipment like a tambourine, triangle, or drum; (4) props for dramatic play (costumes, old clothes, puppets); (5) games that teach numbers—for example, bingo and dominoes; (6) toys for loving—soft dolls, cuddly animals; (7) equipment for active, physical play; (8) toys to encourage sensory learning—collections of fabric scraps, buttons, and leaves, for example; and (9) science discovery instruments like a magnifying glass. You might think that this adds up to an enormous expenditure of money, but you can improvise, and many of these toys are inexpensive. Paper and pencils or crayons, scraps of cloth and wood, glue and old buttons are enough for creative activities. Many parks have equipment for climbing, and museums and zoos have exhibits from which children can learn about their environment.

Parents who are warm and responsive in interactions with children foster the development of language and verbal skills. Parents need not be highly verbal. Interest in what children do and say, encouragement of exploration and play with toys—all these are related to the child's skill in communication. When parents listen and respond with praise and positive interest, avoid criticism and giving orders, children are encouraged to talk and to verbalize their reactions.

In this period, a second task related to mastery is the development of initiative. Children must learn to begin a task with confidence that they can complete it as they wish. Encouragement when a child tries a new idea, even though the result is not completely successful, will ensure future attempts. A parent may find it hard to step aside, as all strategists recommend for so many problems in this period. But, as Freud and Erikson pointed out, the fate of a child's basic sense of initiative depends in part on the child's realization that she can act as an independent person and make something.

As the child begins to initiate activities and to do more for herself, parents may want to arrange for the child to spend some time away from home in a play group or nursery school. Many psychologists believe that the major value of nursery school is the opportunity children have to play with others their age in an environment equipped to meet their needs and interests. Children learn about themselves when they interact with same-sized peers who are preoccupied with the same questions about life. They learn to share and to settle disagreements that arise among equals. Frances Ilg and Louise Ames[30] observe that time away from home pursuing satisfying activities often reduces tensions that arise as part of growing up. Thus, children may have fewer behavior problems and become more cheerful and happy once they start preschool.

Maria Montessori,[31] an Italian pediatrician in the early 1900s, believed that nursery school can provide other benefits as well, if they are organized to do so. She demonstrated the effectiveness of nursery schools in stimulating the psychological growth of very poor children, and people came from around the world to see her schools. She advanced many ideas that Piaget later incorporated in his theories. She states that children learn by action and movement, and are eager to learn as much as possible about the world. They readily absorb sensory stimuli that help to develop intellectual abilities. Montessori believed that children pass through a series of stages when it is easiest for them to learn different things—for example, colors at one stage, forms at another. To learn, children require both freedom and self-control. Adults impose broad limits to encourage self-discipline that protects the rights of everyone. However, within these limits, each child learns at her own rate and develops a sense of her own worth as she observes the products of her work. Montessori emphasized the pleasure children receive from participating in a large social group and contributing to group efforts.

Montessori incorporated these principles in nursery schools that included child-size furniture, special educational equipment to foster learning, instruction in the basic concepts of math and science, and emphasis on independence and self-reliance. Today, each Montessori school is to some extent the creation of the particular teacher and her ways of putting Montessori principles into action. Some teachers are more rigid than others, and some do not include artistic and creative activities such as music and art.

In deciding whether your child will have nursery school experience, and if so what kind, you need to keep in mind the individual needs of the particular child, the schools that are available, and the kinds of experiences possible without school. If you live in a place where there are many children who play together and your child is happy in this group, you may not want to send her to nursery school. If your child has no informal contact with peers, you can select a school that will meet the child's needs and will foster development. If a child is hyperactive, easily distracted, and isolated from other children, you may want to select a small school with a large outdoor area, many physical activities, and opportunities for interaction with others in small groups. A child who loves quiet activities, likes to pursue individual projects, and works independently might feel most at home in a Montessori school. The particular school should be selected on the basis of knowledge of the child's needs and the school's staff, philosophy, and resources. Parents who decide not to send a child to nursery school will find suggestions for using Montessori principles at home in Joan Beck's *How to Raise a Brighter Child.*[32]

A child's initiative is related also to his experience in the Oedipal triangle. How can parents behave so as to minimize the sense of defeat that comes from losing the object of one's affection? Parents can accept the child's feelings of attraction to the parent of the opposite sex as part of the natural course of development. Briggs[33] suggests that parents can comment on the naturalness of the feeling. "Yes, Linda, Daddy is very special to you. Many five-year-olds feel just as you do." It is also important that parents not be seductive in ways that intensify these feelings and make the child feel helpless. Excessive displays of physical affection between parents can add to these feelings and make them more difficult for the child to handle. Parents can help, too, by not giving intense expression of physical feelings to children of the opposite sex. Kisses on the mouth, prolonged fondling and caressing may intensify erotic desires and fantasies and make it harder for children to cope. Briggs writes, "Calm acceptance of attachment needs and the avoidance of provocative acts permit a youngster to say, 'My feelings are all right. There is nothing wrong with me for having them. My parents will help me keep them in bound.' "[34]

Mussen and Eisenberg-Berg summarize the ways that parents can help children develop helping and caring behaviors:

> Parents who want to raise prosocial children, or to increase the prosocial activities of their children, may be advised, with very little risk, to employ several time-honored practices: modeling helping and sharing behaviors clearly and frequently; reasoning with their children in disciplining them; encouraging the children to reflect on their own and others' feelings, emotions, and expectations; maintaining high standards for the child and being explicit about these; assigning responsibilities for others early.[35]

SUMMARY

We have looked at the expanding world of the preschooler and the child's increasing abilities. Increasing physical and verbal skills and knowledge of the world enable children to direct their activities effectively and to assertively seek information from parents. Many preschool children begin to spend significant amounts of time way from home in nursery schools.

We have looked at the problems of this period and have discussed how to help children become more independent and in control of their bodies and their social behavior. Parents are advised to make opportunities available for learning and social interaction with age-mates. They should also, as much as possible, stand back and let children do things for themselves. Children are bursting with energy and enthusiasm for learning. Helpful guidance, both by word and by modeling approved behavior, enables children to channel this energy and use it for optimal development. Warmth and encouragement of what the child does helps the child to rise above failure and concentrate on success.

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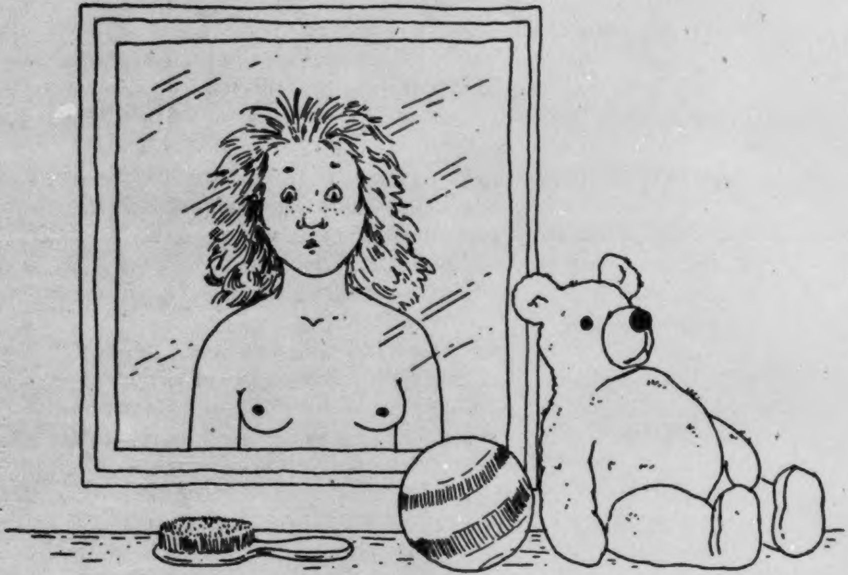
9

The elementary school years

These years, from five to twelve, are the golden age of childhood. Children have mastered eating, sleeping, dressing and toileting. They have gained control of their physical behavior, social behavior, and language. They express themselves easily and can take care of many of their own needs. Their interest in the world continues to expand and they are entertaining companions for parents and other adults. Yet they do not have the responsibilities of adolescence, when they will need to make decisions and carry out activities that have lifelong impact. Both parents and children enjoy the elementary years. Children build a sense of competence that will sustain them during adolescence, when so much changes and they often feel at odds with themselves, their parents, and their peers. Parents, too, build up a backlog of enjoyable experiences and a companionable relationship with children that will carry them through the crises that arise in the adolescent years.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

From ages five to ten, girls and boys have approximately the same height, weight, and general physical measurements. At five they are about forty-two inches in height and about forty to forty-five pounds in weight. By age ten, they are about fifty-two inches in height and about seventy-five to eighty pounds in weight. Beginning at age ten, the growth patterns of boys and girls diverge. Girls begin a two-year period of rapid growth that comes before the first menstruation. Boys do not begin their growth spurt for two to three more years. The sexes also differ in



how the parts of the body grow in relation to each other. Beginning at about age nine, girls' hip bones become wider than those of boys. Average shoulder measurements remain the same for the two sexes until about thirteen, when boys' shoulders broaden and increase in strength. We tend to think that mature women have broader hips than men, but in fact the main difference between men's and women's outlines is produced by the broader shoulders of men.

Because of rapid growth and changes in body shape, girls are sensitive about their bodies and fearful of what may come. Research[1] suggests that prior to the onset of the menses, girls have a confused body image. Menstruation leads to a clear awareness of sexual characteristics—broadened hips, smaller waist, breasts—regardless of when this growth occurs.

Marked individual differences in rate of growth are found. Two boys or two girls who will have the same adult height may be seven or eight inches apart in height at age twelve. Such differences can cause problems for two groups—the early maturing girls and the late maturing boys. Harold Jones[2] found that early maturing girls were less popular, less sociable, less cheerful, less poised, and less expressive. Classmates considered them submissive and withdrawn. Because early maturation intensified girls' interests in boys and dating at a time when other girls and boys were not interested, the withdrawal from peers is understandable. These girls often sought older friends who had the same interests, but they were not as socially mature as older friends so they were often rejected by this group, too. Because late maturing girls are more like the boys in their classes in rate of development and general interests, and because they have a longer period to grow and adapt to all the physical changes, late maturing girls seem to be above average in social poise, expressiveness, sociability, and attractiveness.

The early maturing boy has the advantage of increased height, weight, and strength for games and sports.[3] Elementary school children value athletic skills and the qualities of a "real boy." And so the early maturing boy is likely to be popular, outgoing, happy, self-confident, and a leader among peers. Peers consider late maturers childish because of their physical appearance. Because they cannot get attention in more approved ways, late maturers may seek attention through restless, childlike behavior such as clowning. However, other strengths or other sources of security may counterbalance the stress of temporary physical inadequacies, and so it is impossible to predict the effects of rate of development on any given child.

A positive body image and satisfaction with one's physical attributes are important to both boys and girls. Girls will be experiencing more physical changes toward the end of the elementary school period, and parents must be alert to sensitivities and anxieties in this area. One mother reported that she hadn't realized how sensitive her eleven-year-old girl was about body changes. Then one day she went into the bathroom while her daughter was in the bathtub and saw her taking a bath in her bathing suit—so that even she did not have to see the changes that were taking place.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

According to Piaget,[4] intellectual growth takes two leaps during this period. From four to seven, the preoperational stage, the child is able to figure out problems intuitively and give reasons for what he or she thinks. The reasons are based on what is seen and observed at the moment, rather than on a set of verbalized principles or operations. At about age seven, the child enters the stage of concrete operations, and at about age twelve, the stage of formal operations. Thus, a large share of mature reasoning capabilities emerge during the elementary years.

What does Piaget mean by the term concrete operations? He means that the child can think more logically and is not so bound by the appearance of objects. He understands conservation of quantity—the child realizes that when a ball of clay is flattened into a long, round piece, the amount of clay remains the same. And gradually he understands conservation of weight and volume. The child grasps relations among a series of objects and easily arranges a series of sticks in terms of length with little trial and error. His thought moves quickly from a subset of elements to the whole picture. If given a box of brown wooden beads with a few white wooden ones mixed in and asked if a necklace made of wooden beads would be longer than one of brown beads, the child quickly answers "Yes," and explains "because there are more wooden beads than brown beads."

The child's concept of time is refined during these years. A sense of time includes the notion of a succession of events (before, simultaneously, and after) and a sense of duration of time (the interval that separates the successive events). In the preoperational stage (four to seven) children often do not associate a succession of events with the idea of duration, and they tend to focus on one aspect or another. For example, if you ask a five-year-old girl if she has a friend who is older, she might say "Yes," and explain the friend is older because she is bigger. If asked whether the friend was born before or after her, she would not be able to answer because she has not coordinated duration with succession. Piaget found that 75 percent of the children he observed could not coordinate age and birth date before age seven or eight. Realizing that children do not associate both aspects of time until about this age can help parents be patient when children ask questions about time and to understand why children are so oblivious to the passage of time when you want them to be aware of it.

In the stage of concrete operations, children are able to think more logically, to form classes, and to count because they are increasingly decentered—that is, less focused on their own perceptions and more involved in the qualities and functional properties of what they observe. They are more objective in their observations and they have a keen interest in understanding the mechanisms or principles by which objects operate. Children try to organize perceptions into operations for dealing with concrete objects in front of them.

At age twelve or thereabouts, children move into the stage of formal operations. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, but it is mentioned here briefly because some children are in this stage before they leave elementary school. Although children can reason logically when confronted with objects and changes they can see in the stage of concrete operations, Piaget believes they still cannot reason logically about verbal propositions or hypothetical situations. In the stage of formal operations, adolescents can speculate freely and arrive at a solution without having the objects or people directly at hand. Further, they are able to enumerate all possible combinations of events, test the outcomes of particular procedures, and seek proof of assertions.

Piaget is not the only observer to note changes that occur in the level of thinking at about age seven. A host of experimental studies of children's perception and learning reveal that, between five and seven, changes result in a higher level of thinking. Children can pay attention to more cues, deduce principles in the face of changing conditions, organize experience to make predictions, and plan before acting.

Growth and maturation of the brain may underlie these changes. Between four and seven, areas of the brain responsible for the coordination of sensory perception and additional association areas mature and yield information on the relations between objects that result in a higher level of intellectual functioning. Maturation in the prefrontal, cortical areas of the brain, responsible for planning and reasoning, may account for changes in children's abilities to reason at ages seven and twelve. Parents must recognize that shifts in the child's level of intellectual reasoning depend, in large part, on the growth and functioning of the brain. Children differ in the rate of maturation, and boys, on average, are two years behind girls. And so we can expect great individual differences in children's abilities to apply general rules and in their understanding of the long-range implications of rules. Children may have less control over these capacities, which depend on brain development, than parents assume. Parents need to restrain themselves from asking, "When will you ever learn to think?" and "Why can't you look ahead and realize you'll need things next week?" Parents' expectations of a child must be tailored to the abilities of the child, and the child may need reminders or special structure to help him look ahead and plan behavior.

The most important event of these years is the child's entrance into school. The most influential socializing force, apart from the child's family, is the school. The child is at school for five or six hours each day, five days a week, for nine months a year. The school serves as a meeting place for peers and a setting for interpersonal interactions. In addition, it introduces significant adults who come to know the child well but are not part of the family circle. Teachers can, and often do, have a profound effect on children.

Schools are structured so that the girls' abilities are most valued.[5] Girls tend to be less physical, more verbal, more responsive to auditory stimuli, and more able to concentrate on a task as early as the preschool years. Not all girls have these characteristics, but many do. Boys, on average, are active and curious. They are likely to learn from doing, manipulating, and seeing. They have greater difficulty concentrating for extended periods of time. Given these sex differences, it is not surprising that boys are described as hyperactive nine times as often as girls, and that they are much more likely to experience reading problems. Until schools change to take greater account of needs of boys, parents can expect their sons may have more problems in school than their daughters.

When children begin to attend school, they learn new social and emotional skills. They must be able to sit still and pay attention for long periods of time. If they get absorbed in activities and want to continue, they must learn to move along when the teacher requires a change in activity. Shy and inhibited children must learn how to be around children with whom they do not feel comfortable. They must learn not to feel anxious when their work is compared with the work of other children.

School requires new cognitive skills and abilities. The intellectual activity of preschool children focuses on similarities. In elementary school much effort is directed at noting small differences. For example, a chair is a chair no matter which way it faces. However, when learning to read and write, children need to pay attention to small differences; a "*b*" and a "*d*" are only slightly different, but that difference is very important. Similar differences are found in words—mat, mit, put, pat, pet, pot.

Children must develop the ability to focus on particular tasks and ignore distracting factors, such as boredom, fatigue, or other children. Preschoolers can move from one activity to another. Elementary school pupils stay with an assigned task until the teacher gives them permission to go to a new activity—they must conform to regulations and do their work according to certain rules. They must also learn to be assertive, to ask questions about what they do not understand. Learning occurs most easily when children take an active part in the process—manipulating objects, seeking information. And so the task for children is not the inhibition of all activity with docile submission to school routine and the teacher, but rather inhibition of physical activity and direction of attention to learning activities.

Parents recognize that children learn valuable skills in school but they sometimes wonder how reliable teachers are as observers of their children. Many parents live in fear and trembling of what the teacher will say about their child at conferences. If the description is vastly different from the parent's perception—particularly if it is more negative—what weight should a parent give to the teacher's view? A teacher's opinion should always be taken very seriously. Where there are discrepancies between teacher's and parent's view of the child, both may be correct because home and school may elicit different behaviors.

Why is a particular child's behavior different in school? If the child's behavior is better at school, the parent can try to find out how the teacher interacts with the child. She may have specific techniques for handling problems. If the child is rebellious, more difficult at school, there are many possible causes. The child may find the work difficult and be expressing tension. The child may be accustomed to fewer restrictions and find routine hard to accept. The child may be responding to frustration in peer relations and be acting out problems. All possible sources of tension must be investigated, including physical problems, such as poor eyesight or hearing that make school hard.

What a child's teacher thinks of him or her is important. When opinions are negative, parents should try to understand why. When parents and teacher share what they know about a child, they are all better equipped to understand that child and to facilitate the child's development. When children make critical but perhaps accurate statements about a teacher's behavior, parents can acknowledge the possible accuracy of the comment without disparaging the teacher as a person. This can be a situation that helps a child learn to accept and respect an individual while recognizing that person's faults and problems. And so it can help a child to accept his or her own faults.

A teacher's characteristics influence a student's school progress and behavior. When a teacher is warm and encouraging, stimulates the child to participate actively in mastering the material, sets high standards, and gives recognition for work well done, the child's grades and test scores increase. Parents cannot guarantee such a teacher each year for a child, but they can compensate for a teacher's lack of support by being interested in a child's work and providing praise and acceptance for the child's achievements.

Teachers are important as conveyers of values and models of behavior. Children will imitate a teacher's style, gestures, and attitudes. If a teacher is critical in presenting material, children may be critical. Thus, it is wise to have some understanding of the teacher and her style of behavior. A mother who volunteers to work at school a few hours each week will have a chance to evaluate the atmosphere of her child's classroom. She will be better able to assess the meaning of her child's critical comments about school, peers, and teacher, and better able to understand the teacher's point of view. And she will have an opportunity to observe her child and other children his or her age. Many positive qualities may have gone unnoticed at home, and conversely some aspects of immaturity may have gone unobserved.

Peers

As children enter elementary school and meet more agemates, opportunities for friendships and group activities expand. As children move through elementary school, they form deeper attachments with close friends and share thoughts and feelings. Peers at school and in the neighborhood are playmates in games that become highly ritualized when children are between eight and twelve—kickball, hide-and-seek, and baseball. Children consider the rules of the game unbreakable, and the rules form a structure in which the child knows what to do and feels comfortable. A new child can easily be included and feel at home. These games teach children that social relations involve rules, and that rules are more important than any child's feelings or preferences at the moment. Each person takes a part in the game, and the success of the entire game depends on each individual's playing the part without complaint. As children approach adolescence, they come to see the rules as conventions that can be changed.

Games with peers provide outlets for expressing positive and negative feelings. Aggression often is expressed in physical activities like chasing, grabbing the ball, striving to beat the opponents. Affection and feelings of companionship arise from working together to achieve a common goal. Games allow emotional expression within the boundaries of the rules and help the child build the capacity for self-control.

As physical and intellectual skills increase in these years, children join more formal groups. Bluebirds, Cub Scouts, and Brownies start at age seven or eight and engage children in a wide variety of activities—craft skills, short trips, and overnight camping trips. In addition, at about these ages, children begin to take up organized athletics. They may, as young as age eight, join athletic teams—swimming, baseball, soccer, touch football. Some children also start lessons in music, dance, or drawing that involve them with other children. As a child participates in group activities she tests her skills and compares her performance with those of other children. These comparisons help the child to form a sense of her own abilities.

Who are the children who are liked in the elementary school years? Popular children are, as the Scout pledge advises, friendly, adaptable, considerate of the needs of others. In one series of studies[6] children from first to ninth grade reported characteristics of their school friends. At each age level, for both boys and girls, popular children were described as "not bossy," "not a fighter," "not getting mad at others," "friendly," and "good sport." At all ages, boys described as being athletic, good at games, and as "a real boy" were considered popular. In another study, popular children were described by teachers as persevering, adaptable, outgoing, and friendly. As in the preschool years, then, children like other children who treat them well and act in ways that promote activity and fun.

Parents

The role of the parent changes as children require less direct physical care. Parents become facilitators who teach skills or arrange for instruction of various kinds.

They help children practice, and they provide encouragement and support as children test their abilities. Many parents find that they spend as much time driving children to and from various activities as they spent changing diapers and feeding them as infants.

Parents continue to serve as models—when they are warm and generous, children develop similar qualities. When they model aggression and impulsiveness, children often adopt these qualities. Children are also learning sexual attitudes from parents. A recent study[7] of college students' memories of "primal scene" events reveals that many children in the elementary school years are aware of parents' sexual activities and have reactions to them. They have caught glimpses of parents in bed together, caressing each other, and they report a variety of emotional reactions—excitement, arousal, confusion, fear. Similarly, students report a wide range of beliefs about the positive or negative influence of parents' sexuality. Some feel they absorbed an open-minded attitude toward sex as natural and satisfying; others feel they learned to be inhibited. Whatever the specific reaction, most agreed they were influenced by parents' behavior and feelings. Parents are models they follow or reject but are rarely neutral about.

Young children up to about ages seven or eight regard parents as perfect. But gradually they learn that parents are not always right—and, indeed, that children are sometimes right and parents can be wrong. Children at this age begin to question parents' wisdom, to doubt their advice. Although parents are no longer all-powerful and all-knowing, children, nevertheless consider them helpful and caring persons.

Self

Children in the early elementary school years define themselves in terms of their physical features, their material possessions, and the kinds of things they can do. Note this description of a nine-year-old boy: "My name is Bruce C. I have brown eyes. I have brown hair. I have brown eye brows. I'm nine years old. I LOVE! Sports. I have seven people in my family. I have great! eyesight. I have lots! of friends. I live on 1923 Pinecrest Dr. I'm going on ten in September. I'm a boy. I have a uncle that is almost seven feet tall. My school is Pinecrest. My teacher is Mrs. V. I play Hockey! I'm almost the smartest boy in class. I LOVE! food. I love fresh air. I LOVE School."[8]

With increasing age children begin to think of their psychological qualities—their personality traits—and describe themselves in more general terms. Note the following description of an eleven-and-one-half-year-old girl: "My name is A. I'm a human being. I'm a girl. I'm a truthful person. I'm not pretty. I do so-so in my studies. I'm a very good cellist. I'm a very good pianist. I'm a little bit tall for my age. I like several boys. I like several girls. I'm old fashioned. I play tennis. I am a *very* good swimmer. I try to be helpful. I'm always ready to be friends with anybody. Mostly I'm good, but I lose my temper. I'm not well-liked by some girls and boys. I don't know if I'm liked by boys or not."[9]

A sense of self arises from relationships with those close to us. We absorb attitudes toward us and react to ourselves as others have. In these years, the circle of influential people expands to include teachers, peers, and leaders in activities like Little League, orchestra, or Scouts. The child's self-concept is influenced by such activities. As children explore the environment, they develop skills and abilities that increase feelings of competence, pleasure in life, and self-esteem. Erikson emphasizes that elementary school children need a sense of industry—of wanting to make things and accomplish things. And during these years children's interests expand in part because of physical and mental development. Children now have the dexterity needed to study a musical instrument, participate in athletics, and develop creative abilities like drawing.

As the child's physical, intellectual, and social competencies increase, control of negative emotions and the capacity for helping others also grow. Children who are between six and eight are less aggressive than preschool children and less likely to show physical aggression when they do get angry. They react verbally. However, when they do get mad, these children are likely to try to hurt the other person's feelings. Thus, older children, although less often angry, are more likely to be genuinely hostile.

As children learn to understand the other person's point of view, they become more capable of generosity and sharing, particularly when they see such behavior modeled by adults. Even so, they are sensitive to criticism from others, so they sometimes fail to act, for fear of rejection, when others are in distress.

MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Children begin to learn simple family rules when they are about one year old. But it is in the elementary school period that they internalize family and social values. Freud used the word "superego" to refer to the internalized values that direct the individual's behavior. The superego is thought to arouse pleasure or anxiety or guilt about possible actions, and these feelings permit or prevent the anticipated behavior.

A strong attachment to a principled, self-directed adult who not only describes approved behaviors but practices them in everyday life is the most important factor in helping children to internalize and obey rules. Although the adult's own behavior is more important than the words, verbal statements about right and wrong help children to take the role of another and to link moral thoughts and attitudes with the rewards that follow approved behavior.

The child's moral development is also influenced by what he sees happens to others. When a child observes that peers or adults break the rules and experience no consequences of their acts, that child is likely to break rules. When adults give harsh, unpredictable, and poorly explained punishments to decrease disapproved behaviors, children are least likely to develop a sense of self-control. When adults' responses are not predictable or fair, children learn to do whatever they want as long as they think they won't get caught.

Lawrence Kohlberg[10] describes three levels of moral reasoning. At the earliest (premoral) level, the individual acts to avoid punishments and gain pleasure or reward. There is little concern for the rights of others. At the second (conventional) level, the individual acts to conform to the rules or regulations laid down by powerful authorities like parents or the law. At the most advanced (principled) level, the individual acts to satisfy a set of internal standards concerning fairness and justice.

During the early elementary school years, until about ages seven or eight, children reason at the premoral level and act to avoid punishments and gain rewards. By about the age of ten, conventional moral reasoning has developed, although premoral thinking still occurs. Very few children at this age display principled reasoning about moral problems. By the age of thirteen, a small percent rely on princpled reasoning—conventional reasoning is still prevalent. However, even at this age, many children still reason in terms of avoiding punishment and gaining rewards. And so it is important for the parents of elementary school children to give praise and social recognition of approved acts and, at the very least, to give punishments by ignoring disapproved acts.

PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES

Some behaviors that parents consider problems occur so frequently that they are almost the norm for this age period. For example, from five to nine years, problems of overactivity, oversensitivity, temper tantrums, and specific fears characterized more than 30 percent of a sample of boys who were followed longitudinally.[11] Problems of 30 percent of girls in this age period also included oversensitivity and specific fears. Tantrums tended to decrease more rapidly, as did overactivity, which was not a widespread problem for girls after age six. However, girls were more often described as excessively reserved.

From ages nine to eleven, about one-third of three thousand boys and three thousand girls were described by their mothers as being restless, stubborn, demanding attention, and willing to fight to get their own way.[12] But the same percentage were described as being afraid to do the wrong thing, unable to take criticism, and easily hurt. Throughout the years from five to twelve, then, boys and girls are active and restless as well as being sensitive and fearful. Boys are more likely to have severe problems with overactivity and temper tantrums, and girls are more likely to hold their feelings in.

Knowing that these behaviors occur frequently does not make them easy to live with, but it does help parents to relax. When they realize that many children have these troubles, they are more understanding of their children and of themselves as parents.

What are the kinds of events and problems that preoccupy children of this age? Recent research[13] gives clues as to problem areas. Children aged nine to eleven were asked to rate the twenty events listed in Table 9-1 on a scale ranging from most upsetting (7) to least upsetting (1). Parent-related problems rated high—losing a parent and fights between parents were both highly stressful events and events experienced by a significant number of children. Other research[14] also suggests that children are very upset when family members do not get along. Even when separated and divorced parents fight, children become upset, and are more likely, themselves, to get in fights at school. Children's sensitivity is reflected in their distress at embarrassing situations—wetting pants, being caught in a theft, being ridiculed in class. Although the vast majority of students like school, it is also a source of anxiety, frustration, and unhappiness. Children worry about grades and tests, about being retained in a class, and about making mistakes.

School is clearly a source of worry to children and school work is a source of concern to parents. Let's look at three problems related to school—getting to school on time, homework, and learning disabilities.

Getting to school on time

The child who is always—or even frequently—late for school needs help. Such behavior, if not dealt with, can become a habit that will be difficult to change. Perhaps the child has trouble finding a clean shirt or matching socks. Perhaps he has too many morning chores. All of these causes are easy to discover and can be remedied quickly. Buy an alarm clock. Have the child put out school clothes the night before. Some morning chores can be done after school.

But perhaps the child's teacher has low expectations for all her pupils and for this child in particular. Perhaps the child is a newcomer in the neighborhood or the school and has not yet been accepted by his peers. In these situations the causes run deeper and the solutions may be more difficult to achieve.

Ginott, Gordon, and the behaviorists[15] all encourage independence in children. They all recommend that parents purchase an alarm clock for the child, help the child set the alarm to allow plenty of time to get ready in the morning, and then let the child take the consequences of being late. A child who misses the school bus

TABLE 9-1
CHILDREN'S RATINGS OF THE STRESSFULNESS OF LIFE EVENTS

Life events	*Scale[a] value*	*Percent of sample experiencing this event*
New baby sibling	1.17	25.6
Giving class report	2.58	68.1
Going to dentist	2.73	77.7
Losing in game	3.16	81.2
Picked last on team	3.30	49.6
Not making 100	3.75	83.1
Scary dream	4.08	76.6
Move to new school	4.60	42.8
Ridiculed in class	5.28	46.9
Getting lost	5.49	56.1
Having an operation	5.51	30.5
Sent to principal	5.75	42.0
A poor report card	6.23	46.0
Suspected of lying	6.53	82.3
Caught in theft	6.63	12.3
Parental fights	6.71	64.0
Wetting in class	6.74	6.0
Academic retainment	6.82	10.9
Going blind	6.86	4.1
Losing parent	6.90	20.2

[a] Least upsetting event = 1.0
Most upsetting event = 7.0

SOURCE: Yamamoto, K., Children's Ratings of the Stressfulness of Experience. Developmental Psychology, 1979, 15, 581-582. Copyright 1979 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted by permission.

and must walk will be late. And the child who is frequently late to school will be subjected to ridicule by peers and to discipline by the teacher.

Gordon suggests active listening—what is the source of the problem? When you learn that, you can take appropriate action. Gordon tells of a mother who learned, by talking with her son, that he liked school but disliked the morning routine—he always had to rush because she waited until the last minute to get him up. She told him he could pick out his clothes the night before, and she gave him an alarm clock so he could get himself up. After that, he had enough time to feed the dog and help with breakfast, and he went off to school each morning feeling cheerful. The solution was simple, once the parent and child thought about it.

Dreikurs[16] believes parents should prepare children for school by helping them to care for themselves—washing, dressing, getting to school alone, taking care of their toys. The child should walk or go to school independently, and mother should let the child take the natural and logical consequences of being late. Behavioral strategists use the same techniques, and rewards and punishment as well.

Homework

We see the same emphasis on independence when it comes to homework. Both Ginott and Gordon believe that the child owns the homework problem. Parents can help by actively listening to the child's problems and making clear statements about their concern and their desire to see the child complete the homework. But parents must let the children experience the consequences of not doing homework. This is similar to what Dreikurs recommends. Some parents will have difficulty standing back and seeing their child suffer the consequences, but it is that experience that will motivate the child in the future.

Is this all that parents can do to encourage effective performance at school? No. Strategists advise against direct help, but all encourage parents to provide indirect help—each child needs a quiet place to work, books, suggestions for scheduling homework, and someone to quiz the child on what is being studied. Dreikurs encourages parents to provide enriching experiences—visits to local museums, stimulating discussions at home, trips to new places.

Behaviorists[17] suggest rewards and removal of privileges to stimulate interest in school work. Children may have met with failure and be reluctant to try again. Rewards and punishment may spark change. Parents are also advised not to expect a child to go from Cs to As or Fs to Cs. Parents must reward small improvements in the beginning. The child who has refused to do homework and then begins to spend fifteen minutes each evening on school work has accomplished something. If small steps are rewarded, the desired behavior will increase. Parents can also present options with built-in rewards—"When you finish the homework, you may play games for half an hour." Although behaviorists believe in providing incentives to get children started, they also aim to have the child work independently as soon as possible.

Learning disabilities

Sometimes a child may do well in several school subjects but perform far below his overall ability in one or two special areas. Or a child may have so much difficulty with subjects like reading and writing that all school work is affected, even though the child seems to understand math or history. When this happens, parents should have the child tested for physical problems like poor eyesight and poor hearing. If these are ruled out as causes of the child's problems, the parents need to consider the possibility of a learning disability.

Learning disabilities are difficult to define precisely. The National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children[18] defines learning disability as one or more deficits in basic learning processes involving spoken or written language, reading, math, and spatial orientation. The deficit results in a discrepancy between the child's overall ability and his performance in class. The discrepancy is not due to physical handicap, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or educational deprivation.

We do not know how many children are affected with these problems or what causes them, but several possible causes have been suggested: (1) a genetic component, since learning disabilities tend to run in families and boys are affected more frequently; (2) prenatal, birth, and postnatal factors like prematurity, low birth weight, or poor oxygen supply during labor; (3) general immaturity or developmental lag; and (4) environmental factors like poor nutrition. Learning disabilities are not caused by low intelligence—children at all levels of intellectual ability have learning disabilities. Einstein and Edison were both thought to have learning problems; yet both were geniuses.

We do know that learning disabilities are often accompanied by behavioral problems, such as hyperactivity, poor attention span, and inability to delay actions. Here we focus on how parents can help children cope with the behavioral problems and with parents' and children's psychological reactions that accompany the learning disabilities. Parents should consult teachers, educational therapists, or specialists in learning disabilities. Two outstanding books are available for parents—*Learning Disabilities: A Family Affair* by Betty Osman,[19] an educational therapist, and *The Learning Disabled Child: A School and Family Concern* by J. Jeffries McWhirter,[20] a counseling and educational psychologist.

Both Osman and McWhirter discuss the parents' initial reactions of shock, attempted denial, anger, guilt, and depression. In their disappointment, parents sometimes blame the child, but more often parents blame themselves. They sometimes feel guilty that they did not recognize the problem sooner. Parents need to accept not only their own feelings, but the feelings and reactions of the child's siblings. Brothers and sisters are likely to resent the time and attention that go to the learning disabled child.

After accepting their own mixed feelings, parents must explain to the child as clearly and honestly as possible what the problem is. In *Minimal Brain Dysfunction*, Richard Gardner[21] writes that we all have difficulties that we must learn to manage—a learning disability is one such difficulty. Children often realize, far sooner than their parents, that they have difficulty learning some kinds of material. They may ignore the problem, focusing instead on the things they do well. They may lose books, forget assignments, or tell parents that they have no homework.

Parents can help a learning disabled child in several ways. First, they can show love and attention, regardless of the level of school work. They can value the child's feelings and encourage the expression of the frustration and anger felt at the extra effort required to do the work other children do easily. Anger at parents and teachers for setting firm limits and giving reminders of work is also felt and should be expressed as well.

Second, organizing the environment and establishing regular routines help such children to function more effectively. Box 9-1 contains suggestions for parents who want to structure the environment. Behavioral techniques described in Chapter Eight for the hyperactive child are also effective.

Third, parents can help by serving as a resource for the child, taking a more active role to show a child how to do a task. Osman says parents may have to show a child how to structure a book report or work a math problem the first time the task is assigned. The next time the child can do it alone. However, help with homework must not become a routine. Equally important, parents can engage

BOX 9-1

ORGANIZING THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Hang a bulletin board in each child's room and in a central family area, like the kitchen, so schedules, chores, and reminders for important events can be posted.
2. Get in the habit of posting signs on mirrors, the refrigerator door, and the front door to remind children of special events or chores.
3. Have children leave messages of whereabouts or telephone calls in one place so each family member can check there.
4. Have the key to the house on a heavy string or bright ribbon that is hard to lose, and get a special hook in the child's room for it.
5. Identify all clothing with name tags so children can easily find lost items at school or friends' homes.
6. Write names and addresses on all notebooks and other possessions like eyeglass cases or backpacks in the event they are lost; keep identification in wallet or purse if carried.
7. Have bedroom furnished with plenty of cabinets or shelves for storage; have dividers in drawers to keep clothes separated.
8. Have a specific desk or study area for each child where the child can take books, notebooks, and papers immediately on returning home and where all school work can be done. It reduces the number of places you have to search for papers and books.
9. Try to organize a daily family routine, a regular time for getting up, eating meals, leaving the home and returning. Such a regular schedule helps to compensate for poor memory.

Adapted from: Osman, B., *Learning Disabilities: A Family Affair* (New York: Random House, 1979), p. 59.

BOX 9-2

PROMOTING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS FOR LEARNING DISABLED CHILDREN

1. Accept the child's statement of interpersonal troubles as valid. Empathy when a child is having trouble with friends is more valuable and helpful than criticism or denying the troubles exist.
2. Discuss how one goes about making friends. Asking children how they would feel if certain acts were done to them helps them to take the role of the other person.
3. Rewards might help the child get started with friendships, or serve as incentives to try extra hard to use control.
4. Recognize that some children mature more slowly and need more time before they are ready to sleep overnight at a friend's or develop deep friendships.

Adapted from: B. Osman, *Learning Disabilities: A Family Affair* (New York: Random House, 1979).

children in many games that will strengthen intellectual skills and help integrate motor and perceptual behavior. McWhirter's book contains many specific suggestions for toys, physical activities, board games, and card games that stimulate development and also are fun.

Fourth, disciplinary techniques that anticipate and prevent problems from arising are useful. For example, if a child is easily excited, careful scheduling of events and monitoring of the amount of incoming stimuli, even in the home, can reduce emotional outbursts. If a parent sees a child building up a lot of irritation or frustration at a sibling, separation before a blow-up is helpful.

Fifth, parents can help children build social skills. The experience of being a slow learner in one or more areas does little for one's self-esteem or feelings of confidence with peers. This is particularly true during the elementary school years, when it is so important to the child to be liked by everyone else. And so learning disabled children may become loners. Parents can help by arranging brief get-togethers with other children, for an hour or two. These will give the child valuable experiences that contribute to confidence. Parents also help by encouraging the child to develop a special skill that will bring recognition in the group. Osman makes suggestions for promoting social relationships (see Box 9-2).

Parents must be careful to neither overindulge nor overprotect a learning disabled child. If parents feel guilty, they must deal with their own feelings, so that they can be truly helpful to the child. Otherwise they may rob the child of the opportunity to develop competence and confidence.

The isolated child

If a child shows little interest in others and has many activities that absorb attention, parents may not want to intervene unless activities are being used as substitutes for friends. However, many children who do not have friends wish they had, and parents can help.

Following Ginott's methods, one mother[22] took action to help her son make friends. She discussed the problem with his teacher, who said she would involve him in more group activities. The teacher also gave the mother a list of boys' names, so the mother could organize a group activity. After talking it over with her son, the mother started a bowling club. The club lasted only a week—at the first meeting her son had the lowest score, and he refused to try again. However, a few days later, one of the boys invited him over to play, and a friendship began to grow.

As the mother observed her own and her son's behavior, she realized she had encouraged the boy to depend on her for companionship, and had protected him from the rougher and more critical companionship of his older brother and father. She decided to give up her role as protector and to encourage a closer relationship between father and son. Thus, the mother modified her own behavior, and at the same time she increased the child's skills as a behaviorist would.

Gordon considers the child owns the problem with friends. Parents can encourage children to talk about this problem and can listen actively. As children talk about what is bothering them, they may find ways of solving their problems. But until then, or until the child asks for help, parents must accept isolation as the child's problem.

Dreikurs also stresses the child's need to learn how to get along and to accommodate her interests and activities to those of peers. He believes that bashfulness and timidity may stem from overindulgence by parents. The child seeks attention and regard from others by doing nothing, rather than by taking an active role. Parents can encourage positive interaction and ignore demands for attention. While it sounds like Dreikurs would do little, nevertheless he does advise paying appropriate attention to children, playing games and working on projects with them, and encouraging them to participate in activities with other children.

More than other strategists, behaviorists have focused on strategies for helping children make friends. Oden and Asher[23] have devised a system of coaching children in interpersonal skills. They give children verbal instructions about effective ways of interacting and provide opportunities to apply the rules in play sessions. Instructions cover four topics: (1) participating in group activities (getting started, paying attention to the game), (2) cooperating in play (sharing, taking turns), (3) communicating with partner (talking or listening), and (4) validating and supporting the peer (giving attention and help). Box 9-3 contains an example of the coaching Oden and Asher developed.

The instructions actively involve the children and require that they give examples of behavior that illustrate the principle and behavior that is opposite. The focus is primarily on the concepts the child does not understand. The child is encouraged to use these principles in playing games. Oden and Asher found that, after six play sessions which lasted about ten or twelve minutes, children increased

BOX 9-3

EXAMPLES OF A COACHING DIALOGUE TO ENCOURAGE COOPERATION

COACH: Okay, I have some ideas about what makes a game fun to play with another person. There are a couple of things that are important to do. You should *cooperate* with the other person. Do you know what cooperation is? Can you tell me in your own words?

CHILD: Ahh . . . sharing.

COACH: Yes, sharing. Okay, let's say you and I are playing the game you played last time. What was it again?

CHILD: Drawing a picture.

COACH: Okay, tell me then, what would be an example of sharing when playing the picture-drawing game?

CHILD: I'd let you use some pens too.

COACH: Right. You would share the pens with me. That's an example of cooperation. Now let's say you and I are doing the picture-drawing game, can you also give me an example of what would *not* be cooperating?

CHILD: Taking all the pens.

COACH: Would taking all the pens make the game fun to play?

CHILD: No!

COACH: So you wouldn't take all the pens. Instead you'd *cooperate* by *sharing* them with me. Can you think of some more examples of cooperation? (The coach waited for a response.) Okay, how about taking turns. . . . Let's say you and I . . . (etc.). Okay, I'd like you to try out some of these ideas when you play (name of new game) with (other child). Let's go and get (other child), and after you play I'll talk to you again for a minute or so and you can tell me if these things seem to be good ideas for having fun at a game with someone.

In the 3-5 minute postplay review, the coach asks the child, "[illegible] you get a chance to try out some of the ideas we talked about? (The coach waited for a response.) Do you think that (other child) liked playing the game? Let's see, did you *participate*, that is, did you get started," etc.

SOURCE: Sherri Oden and Steven R. Asher, "Coaching Children in Social Skills for Friendship Making," *Child Development*, 1977, 48, 495–506.

in likeability and many were nominated as best friends in a class assessment. These benefits persisted and were measurable a year later.

Parents can try to do this coaching as they observe their children's interactions with others. When parents comment later, in a calm way, on troubles that interfered with the child's having optimal fun, and ask how such problems might have been avoided, they help to increase the child's social competence. The parent should not sound critical and interfering when making these remarks.

The aggressive child

Aggressiveness can take many forms. Children may physically hit or hurt others; they may be verbally assaultive, taunting, teasing, humiliating, threatening, or demanding. Many children are aggressive at home, at school, and with friends, but a sizeable number are aggressive in only one setting.

Ginott suggests that parents accept the child's anger with sympathy and understanding, although physical and verbal abuse must be controlled. When nine-year-old Eric came home furious because rain had cancelled a class picnic, his mother's impulse was to say "There will be other days," or to criticize him for complaining. Instead, she commented that he seemed disappointed and frustrated. She was astounded when Eric's anger vanished—often his rages upset the entire household.

Gordon suggests sending I-messages when children act aggressively. This permits the child to resolve the problem. However, when safety is involved, parents must send the message in a forceful tone and, if necessary, must take action so the child will respond.

Dreikurs believes that fighting among children is best ignored by parents. If siblings are involved, let them settle the differences themselves. If a child fights with neighborhood children, parents are advised to stand back and let the other children teach the natural and logical consequences of fighting. Peers will either fight back or refuse to play with the child. Parents can talk about the difficulties later, raising questions about consequences of other ways of relating. But parents do not intervene actively.

Gerald Patterson[24] advises parents to take three steps: (1) observe what the child is doing and keep a written record of the number of times the child repeats the behavior, noting when the incidents occur; (2) reward friendly, approved behavior; and (3) use effective punishments like ignoring the behavior, thus removing rewards for disapproved behavior. When these things are done, the child's aggressive, domineering behavior decreases. As parents follow these three steps, they must look at their own behaviors to see how they keep the vicious cycle going. And then they must change their behaviors so that the cycle is interrupted.

Rewarding the child's positive behaviors means looking at all the things the child does to find her strengths. Rewards increase feelings of self-esteem and reduce the tendency to aggression. In giving rewards and using effective punishments, parents must be consistent. This is sometimes difficult. When children do not change immediately, parents must persist. When parents are consistent, children learn the negative consequences of aggressive behavior and the positive consequences of approved behavior.

Once parents have instituted rewards for one new behavior and seen change, they may want to have contracting sessions in which a system of tokens or rewards is established to change several behaviors. A contracting session is useful, too, when brothers and sisters are included. Sometimes brothers and sisters keep fights going or start fights because they know the aggressive child has a short fuse. In a contracting session, the child can be told she will receive a point or a reward every time she walks away from a fight.

If a child's aggressive behaviors occur at school as well, parents may want to involve teachers in setting up a system of points and rewards. The child could earn extra points that could be exchanged for additional recess time, movies, or short trips—activities that can be shared with peers. Or parents can contract with teachers to give rewards at home when children earn points for good behavior in school.

All strategists agree on eliminating aggressive behavior. Ginott and Gordon talk about giving love and attention first and enforcing limits second. The behaviorists talk about limiting behavior first and giving attention and rewards second. As you can see, these strategies have much in common.

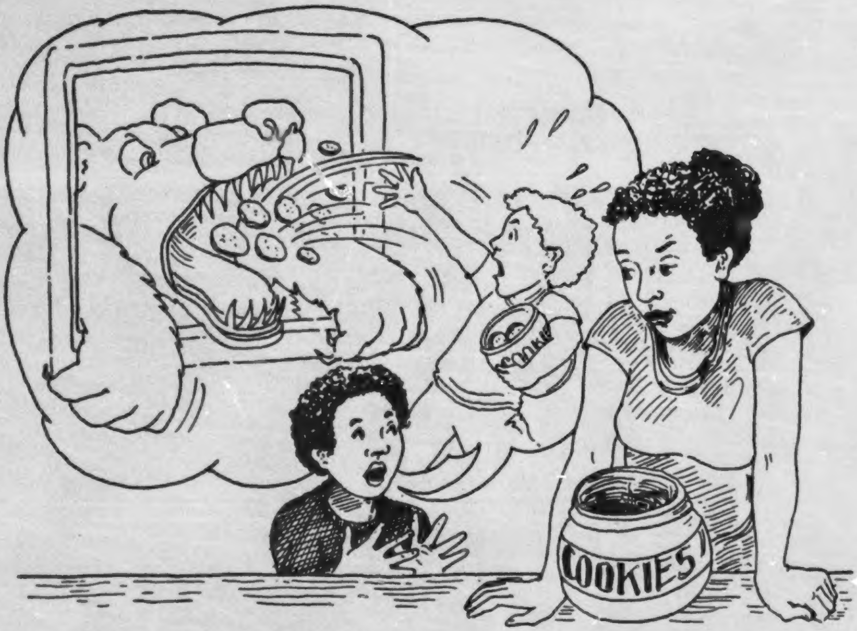
Lying and stealing

Ginott makes several basic points about lying. First, lying may represent the child's basic hopes and fears and, in that sense, is an accurate statement of feelings although not an accurate statement of fact. This is particularly true of preschool children. When a parent knows a young child is lying, the parent can reflect the child's feelings—"You wish you owned a horse," or "You wish you were going to the zoo." Second, parents sometimes encourage lying about feelings. They punish a child who says she hates her sister or tells a relative she is ugly. The child learns it is best to lie about how she really feels. Parents are wiser to accept the child's feelings. They can also explain that polite refusal to comment is a way of being both kind and honest. There are times when, "if you can't say something nice, you shouldn't say anything at all."

Third, parents must avoid provoking a lie by asking an embarrassing question to which they already have the answer. For example, if a parent finds an overdue library book that the child has said he returned, the parent should not ask, "Did you return that book to the library?"

Dreikurs takes an understanding attitude toward lying and urges parents not to view it as a terrible act. If parents are not severe when a child commits a misdeed, the child will not be afraid and will not feel that she must always present herself in the best possible light. When parents are truthful in their everyday lives, the child is more likely to be truthful. When lying does occur, Dreikurs suggests parents remain unimpressed. The child may be lying to get attention or to win a power struggle and make the parents feel helpless.

If a child lies and a parent does not know what to do, Dreikurs suggests thinking of what you should not do, and doing anything else. You might point out how easy it is to fool a parent, and add that if the child needs to lie to feel important you can take it. If this approach does not work, Dreikurs advises a game in which the parent demonstrates how important truthfulness in the family is. In the game, everybody is free to say whatever they like, whether it is true or not. Mother may call a child for a meal that is not there, or promise a movie and then say she did not mean it. A child may come to prefer the truth after such a game. When lying stems



from a need to boost confidence, parents need to show approval and appreciation for positive behavior, so that lying is not the only route to attention.

Like Dreikurs, the behaviorists urge parents to make telling the truth worthwhile. They[25] illustrate how lying is rewarded in the following episode. A young boy knocked over his mother's highly valued vase and broke it. Although he initially denied any knowledge about what had happened to the vase, a few days later he admitted he had broken it. His mother immediately restricted him to the house for the rest of the month, saying that would certainly teach him a lesson. From this incident, the boy learned he could avoid punishment if he lied, and that if he told the truth he could get into trouble. The mother could have said that she was glad the boy had told the truth and asked him to contribute chore money to help pay for a new vase. If she had done that, her son would have learned that honesty is rewarded with respect, and that he would have to help replace things he broke.

Like lying, stealing is not that uncommon among children. Ginott urges parents to remain calm and to insist that the child return the object or make restitution. If, as often happens, the child steals from the parent, the parent asks for return of the object or deducts the cost from the child's allowance. Children are expected to discuss their needs for money or possessions with parents. However, when stealing occurs, parents do not get angry. They express disappointment and hurt. As with lying, if parents know that a child has broken a rule, it is unwise to try to trap the child with questions like, "And where did you get that new whistle?"

Once a parent has expressed frustration and upset, it is the child's responsibility to change his or her behavior.

Gordon recommends mutual problem-solving, as in the following example. A father discovered that his five-year-old son was stealing loose change from the dresser. Father and son held a mutual problem-solving session. The father agreed to give the boy a small allowance, and the boy agreed to save for the special things he wanted.

Dreikurs recommends taking a calm approach in which the child is not criticized or blamed, but helped to be honest.

Stealing results from a variety of motives. Often the child hopes "to put something over" on the adult and to get attention, power, or revenge. Often children do not know precisely why they steal. Calm insistence that articles be returned usually teaches the child not to steal again.

Sibling rivalry

As children grow more skilled and competent in action and language, sibling rivalry takes on new dimensions. Preschoolers cannot have the long-winded verbal, teasing and haranguing arguments that school-age children have, because their language is not sophisticated enough. Also, parents are able to remember their own elementary-school years, when the argued with siblings. When this happens, parents may react to their children's fights and take sides on the basis of their feelings toward their own brothers and sisters. This happened to a couple who had been using Ginott's system.[26] The mother said she could not help taking the side of her younger son, because she could recall how her older brother had dominated her. Her husband, however, was able to remain detached. He reflected the anger between the two boys and suggested that they go to their rooms and write down how the conflict started and what could be done to avoid similar arguments.

Gordon suggests using mutual problem-solving to eliminate the conflict. In the following example, a boy (John) took his brother's (Bob's) baseball cards to show to his friends at school. Bob was upset, sure that his brother would lose or damage the cards. The father, with his arms around both boys, reflected that both boys were upset. He described how worried Bob was, and asked for suggestions. And the boys worked out a solution. John purchased some of the cards from Bob. Then John had some cards of his own, and Bob had money to buy more cards. Mutual problem-solving can eliminate conflicts between brothers and sisters, and it also helps to strengthen relationships. When parents use Gordon's active listening and mutual problem-solving techniques, children get similar amounts of attention and neither is favored.

Dreikurs believes that much sibling rivalry occurs because children want attention from parents. When they realize that fighting doesn't work, they are likely to give it up. Dreikurs' unique contribution is his suggestion that when one child disrupts the family all children should receive the same treatment. Charles, age eight, was a middle child between an achieving, older brother and a well-behaved younger sister. He lied, stole, ruined furniture, and crayoned the walls. Dreikurs advised the mother to treat the children as a unit and make them all responsible for what Charles did.

The next time Charles crayoned on the walls, the mother asked all the children to clean the walls. Charles did not help, but he did not mark the walls again. He said it was no fun if the other children cleaned it up and his mother wasn't angry. When misbehavior no longer resulted in attention, the misbehavior stopped.

Behaviorists use rewards to promote acceptable behavior. In an illustrative incident,[27] a mother offered her older son a trip to the store for an ice cream cone if he could get along with his sister all afternoon. When the children began quarreling, the mother reminded the boy of their agreement. He was unhappy, but he didn't say anything. The mother maintained the calm, detached attitude that Dreikurs recommends.

Chores

In every home there are chores that must be done. The child who helps with chores contributes to the well-being of the whole family. Simultaneously, these responsibilities contribute to the psychological development of the child—his competence and feelings of independence increase as he participates in activities that are necessary and useful to all. Children who help with family chores learn what is required to run a household, and they learn skills they will need as independent adults. When families share in planning and executing household tasks, they learn about each other's special strengths as workers, and they come to rely on each other. Thus, working together brings a special closeness not achieved in other activities.

Gordon recommends that when a parent needs help from a child, the parent should send I-messages that state the need clearly, and then parent and child should engage in mutual problem-solving to decide exactly how the chores can be completed. Behaviorists establish a more formal system. They suggest listing all the jobs that need completing, parceling them out among family members, and writing a formal contract, and preparing a chart (see "The Cooperating Family" in Chapter Eleven). It is difficult to establish a general timetable for including children in family chores. Dreikurs believes they can be included very early, as young as eighteen months to two years. Some families wait until children are older, between five and eight.

Television

Children begin to watch television when they are still infants. Surveys vary in their reports of the number of hours children watch each week. Some surveys[28] report as little as ten to fourteen hours per week, others[29] as much as fifty-four hours per week. Preschoolers and elementary school children watch the most television. In adolescence, interest turns to music and movies for entertainment.

Research on the impact of television has focused most often on the effects of watching different kinds of programs—violent or nonviolent programs, educational or noneducational programs. Children who are prone to behave aggressively are influenced by violent programs and are more aggressive. The behavior of less aggressive children has not been related to the content of the television programs they watch. Children learn not only aggressive behaviors but some cognitive skills as well, by watching educational programs like "Sesame Street." Children from both middle-class and low-income families learn when they watch such programs regularly.

There is least research in the area that may be most important for parents, namely, the effects of watching television—regardless of the content or educational value of the program. Parents and educators are becoming concerned that watching for more than an hour a day may have detrimental effects on children's functioning and development.

Television takes time away from active play and substitutes a passive activity that may make children nervous and tense. In a national sample,[30] 90 percent of mothers reported their children would be engaged in play if they were not watching television. Sharon Gadberry[31] found that when children were permitted to watch television for only half as long as usual, they spent more time reading, their IQs increased, and test behavior indicated they became more reflective before acting. A child's intellectual, language, and social development depends on time spent playing and in active exploration of their world. When this time is reduced, development is affected.

Symptoms of anxiety, tension, and physical illness have been found to be related to television watching. In a study[32] described at a conference and summarized in Joan Beck's *Effective Parenting*, two pediatricians systematically observed the behavior of thirty children and noted how it changed when they did not watch television for a period of time. The group of children, ranging in age from three to eleven, were tired, listless, anxious, suffering from vague stomach pains, vomiting, and unable to sleep, for no physical reasons. Pediatricians found that all these children were watching television excessively—three to six hours daily during the week, and six to ten hours on weekends. Television seemed to make the children anxious and tense, so they could not sleep.

The doctors prohibited television and prescribed after-school play instead. Within three to six weeks, all the children were symptom free. However, at follow-up several months later, only nine children, who watched less than two hours per day, were still symptom-free. Of the thirteen who were permitted to watch with complete freedom, nine had a return of all symptoms. Even though restricted television had such positive effects, mothers did not continue the restrictions.

Parents are well advised to limit television from the very beginning, when the child first starts to watch. An impersonal statement of the rule is best for children, "In our house, we watch television only one hour a day." While controlling the amount of time children spend watching television, parents can give children choices about what they watch within the time limit. Parents can also maximize the benefits of television by watching with children and discussing reactions to the programs. This brings social interaction and questioning to an activity that otherwise is entirely passive.

FACILITATING DEVELOPMENT

In the elementary school years, children gain a greater sense of their individuality by developing and refining physical, intellectual, and social skills, and by interacting more with peers, both in groups and individually. Parents help children grow when they provide opportunities for children to learn new skills, encourage them to try new activities, support their growing interest in peers, and accept their growing independence.

Parents may become involved in children's activities as school aides or homeroom mothers, team coaches, Scout leaders. Such participation contributes to these activities and gives parents opportunities to be with other children the same ages as their own. In these groups, parents can get a better understanding of their children by observing them with their peers. Parents who are drawn into community activities serve as models for their children, who observe social and ethical attitudes in action.

In this period, encouragement of a broad array of interests and activities for both boys and girls can have positive benefits for many years. A broad array of interests includes physical activities of some kind (swimming, dance, baseball, hiking), artistic pursuits (drawing or musical and craft activities), intellectual pursuits (reading, study of a given area of interest), and social interactions with peers. A wide array is related to intellectual effectiveness and psychological stability in adulthood for both men and women.[33] Such activities not only develop valuable skills but provide an outlet for tension built up in other situations. As children's intellectual understanding of the world increases, trips to zoos, aquariums, and museums take on new meaning for parents and children. Such excursions take planning, and many a mother can recall that the best laid plans end in difficulties, but they are worth pursuing, even over the objections of children. Often children are reluctant to go, but just as often they talk about trips for weeks afterward.

During the elementary years, many parents contemplate providing formal religious education. These are the years when children internalize family and social values. If parents are identified with a church, they can include the children in family church activities. However, if parents have no religious affiliation, they may wonder what to do.

One such father of a young child wrote to Joan Beck,[34] author of *Effective Parenting*, to ask for her advice. He could not pretend a belief he did not have in God, but he wanted the child to have the freedom to make her own decision as she matured.

Beck's response is summarized as follows. First, each family must find its own answer. Parents have three alternatives: (1) ignore the whole question, (2) send the child for religious instruction without parents' participation, and (3) develop an inquiring attitude about religion that can be shared with the child as she grows.

Church attendance is relatively low, and so it is increasingly easy to raise a child without religious training. However, children will then have many questions that remain unanswered: Who is God? What happens when we die? Will God punish you? As children see the involvement of grandparents and of other families with religion, as they encounter religious references in reading, they may feel a void in their own experiences. This void may be intensified if they lack a source of comfort or solace when a painful loss occurs.

However, sending a child for instruction without parental participation seems hypocritical. The most reasonable alternative for some parents is to develop an individual belief system that is shared with the child as she grows. Parents can explore different conceptions of God, convey to the child what they accept and do not accept in each conception, discuss the meanings of rituals and symbols, and why others may find them important. In investigating the ideas of different churches, parents may discover a group they can join wholeheartedly. They may rediscover the religion of their parents. Or they may find they want to join a group that is devoted to social action rather than to worship. The process of searching for an agreed upon code can enrich the entire family.

Work, too, can be a family affair that results in fun and family cohesiveness. Parents and children play more complex games together. Board games and card games are interesting for children and appealing to adults during the elementary school years. When family members work and play together, communication increases and improves. Dreikurs writes, "What people enjoy together brings them together. Through games and projects in which all enjoy the fun, a feeling of group solidarity develops. Solidarity is essential for the equality it promotes and for the relaxed and harmonious atmosphere that can become a part of family living."[35]

SUMMARY

This chapter discusses the child's increasing physical, intellectual, and social abilities, which permit a greater variety of activities in the elementary school years from five to twelve. The child becomes increasingly independent, spending a significant amount of time away from home, learning and playing, and becoming part of groups of peers. During these years children are internalizing the rules of these groups, becoming more self-controlled, more helpful, and less often aggressive. As a result of their expanding abilities and more intensive contact with others, children develop a keener awareness of their own special skills and their psychological traits.

The parent's role is to facilitate children's learning of skills and to continue to provide a model of warm, controlled, helpful behavior. When problems arise, parents give children greater responsibility in handling them. However, parents continue to provide structure and limits for the child's behavior and to serve as consultants when children need information. As competence develops, children take a more active role in the family, participating in family councils and helping with chores. Parents and children find they can work and play together with gusto.

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Adolescence

Adolescence lingers in the memory of many of us as the most stressful period of our lives. In a recent national survey[1] "the teen years" from thirteen to nineteen were ranked second only (by one percentage point) to "the seventies" as the worst time in the life span. Adolescence was described as a time when you are immature but you think you know everything and no one can tell you anything. The many changes that occur, the unpredictability of the changes, the need to make major decisions about school and work, the increasing importance of peers' reactions over which teen-agers feel they have little control—all these create demands for adaptation by teens. Parents must keep in mind the tremendous variations in the ways children move from childhood to adulthood and not be surprised if their child does not match the picture presented here.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Physical and physiological changes are numerous. Girls' growth patterns were described in the last chapter. Most boys experience a growth spurt at the beginning of adolescence. Height often comes before weight, and arms and legs grow more quickly than the trunk, so boys may go through a period of being thin and gawky, unable to control gangly arms and legs. Luella Cole and Irma Hall write:

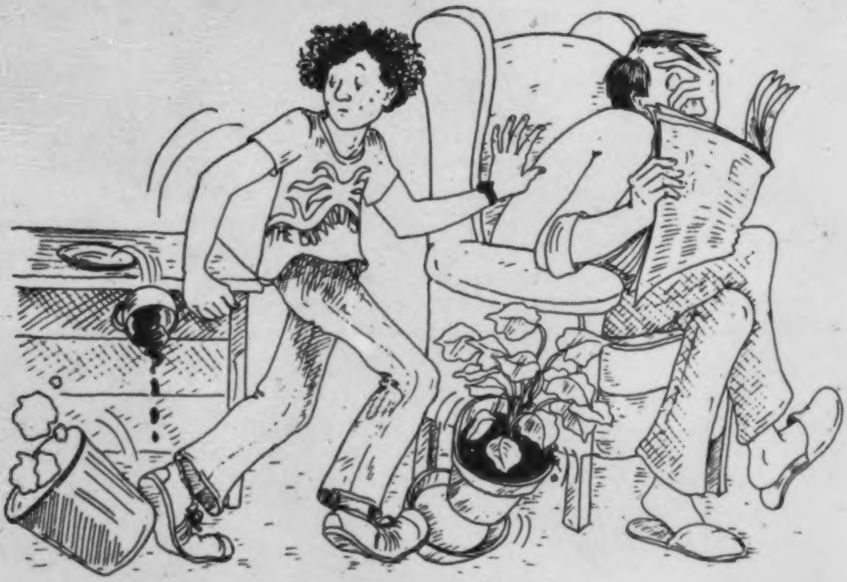
> Since most of his increased height is due to growth in the legs, many a boy finds himself equipped with pedal extremities that get him across a room

> rather faster than he expected, causing him to overrun his objective; they also tend to get tangled in the furniture. His arms, having grown four or five inches in length, also contribute to his miscalculations of distance and lead him into a long series of minor tragedies, from knocking over his water glass because his hand reached it too soon to throwing a forward pass six feet over the receiver's head, because his elongated arm automatically produced far greater leverage than he has been accustomed to.[2]

Voices change, too. Adolescents cannot rely on being able to speak in a steady tone, but go from high to low and back again. Some boys and girls get acne, which can make their lives miserable. One outgoing sixteen-year-old boy puzzled his parents because he suddenly lost interest in parties, evening school events, and activities with friends, including a girl friend. Although his mother remarked on the change, her son gave no explanation until a few months after he began using medication for acne. Then he casually remarked that he had stayed home because he was so embarrassed by the acne.

The strong emotional reactions to these changes can be seen in the following letter: "I'm fifteen and I feel different. It's hard to explain, but I just don't feel good about my body. I can't figure out whether it's beautiful or bad. Guys don't seem to take a great interest in me and I wonder sometimes if they ever will. I feel like something is wrong, but I'm not sure what. Any suggestions?"[3]

Because parents experienced these changes many years ago, they may not recall the anxiety, frustration, and irritability that result from the feeling of lack of control over the body. The most similar adult experience is illness that temporarily



disrupts physical functioning. Imagine having a physical condition that lasts two years and produces unpredictable changes. It is easier, then, to empathize with the sensitive thirteen-year-old who said, after beginning to menstruate, "I don't like it! I feel like a little kid and a woman at the same time. I don't feel human!"

As physical growth is completed, boys and girls have to come to terms with their physical assets and liabilities. Some boys have to accept that they will never be tall or muscular, just as some girls have to accept that they may never be large-busted or willowy. While accepting their physical limitations, teen-agers learn to value and enjoy their own particular assets. We know that girls are concerned about physical appearance, but boys are just as concerned. Like girls, they wash their hair every day and spend hours choosing clothes, worrying about the fit and colors.

Physical changes over which one has little control are accompanied by hormonal changes that can lead to abrupt ups and downs in mood. Happening together, these create feelings of vulnerability and irritability. Teen-agers may be quickly angered by a chance remark or a small incident and often find such anger hard to handle. One thirteen-year-old girl commented to her mother, "Until I was eleven, I was hardly ever angry at anyone. Now I get so angry at my friends, I could just grab and shake them." Shifting needs and wishes are experienced as well. Ginott quotes a sixteen-year-old boy: "I'm always frustrated. I'm in love and there's no girl. I'm overcharged and there's no outlet. I look for a chance to act, to flex my muscles, to feel my strength. I can't talk about it with my parents. I want to learn the bitter from the sweet by tasting, not by talking. I hunger for experience; they feed me explanations."[4]

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Piaget[5] describes the years from twelve to fourteen as the period when adolescents begin to think like adults. They enter the stage of formal operations, in which they think about all possible alternatives in a situation. They can clearly imagine future events and their own responses to those, and they play with hypothetical dilemmas. Parents might expect that this jump to a more abstract level of thinking would make adolescents more objective and realistic, but it does not, in part because of the intensity of their emotions. Adolescents retain a sense of grandiosity and self-importance that can make them think they are immune from the consequences of their acts. They are often objective and insightful about friends and parents but unrealistic about themselves.

Abstract thought processes focus on concerns about other people and about the society at large. Adolescents begin to think about justice and equality, and they try to apply these concepts to their everyday lives. Some become involved in social action groups or volunteer activities. Adelson describes the shift in thought processes from preadolescence to adolescence:

> At the onset of adolescence, the child's mind is all fierce, retributory moralism on the one hand, and deficient competence on the other. How does one

> treat the thief? Clap him in jail, and if he will not learn his lesson, double or triple his sentence, or put him in solitary confinement or torture him? How would you keep people from breaking a law against cigarette smoking? Spies and informers and secret surveillance . . . . Later in adolescence, the child pondering crime and justice speaks altogether differently. He tells us that we must try to understand the sources of crime and that these are likely to be found in the criminal's motives and these in turn are rooted in past and present milieus, in family and companions. He argues that we ought to think beyond punishment to rehabilitation and that jailing someone merely puts him in bad company and reinforces bad habits. A few . . . may feel that the roots of crime run so deep as to require psychotherapy . . . one sometimes senses that the child confessing these sentiments is merely showing off his acquisition of liberal cliches. Nevertheless, these ideas, even if superficial, or superficially felt, reflect a remarkable advance over what went before.[6]

As adolescents turn a searching, critical eye on society, they turn a judgmental eye on parents, evaluating their parents' strengths and weaknesses in what they think is an objective manner. Perhaps the need to find flaws in parents is part of the separation process. As one teen-ager remarked, "I loved you enough to find it hard to separate from you." The teen-ager begins to criticize parents because they do not keep up the house, yard, or car as well as they might, or have not succeeded in business as they could have if only they had more of the kind of insight the adolescent has given them. Teen-agers criticize everything from parents' humor to their religious and political beliefs. This is frequently done in a confident tone of voice suggesting that the parents have little understanding of the matter. The adolescent is surprised if the parents are offended. He or she meant no personal injury, but just thought the parents would like an objective opinion. Parents are often deeply wounded by such remarks, because the children are often close to the truth. Parents need to keep cool heads and be nondefensive while demanding the courtesy one would expect from another adult.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As teen-agers experience the changes of adolescence and establish new relationships with peers and parents, confidence wobbles and personal stability may be disrupted from time to time. Nevertheless, most teen-agers maintain a sense of self-esteem that tides them over the rough spots. As they incorporate all the changes, their self-concepts enlarge. They think of themselves in broader and more abstract terms. During this transition from childhood to adulthood, they are less concrete and specific in self-descriptions, as seen in the following example written by a seventeen-year-old girl.

> I am a human being. I am a girl. I am an individual. I don't know who I am. I am a Pisces. I am a moody person. I am an indecisive person. I am an ambitious person. I am a very curious person. I am not an individual. I am a loner. I am an American (God help me). I am a Democrat. I am a liberal

> person. I am a radical. I am a conservative. I am a pseudoliberal. I am an atheist. I am not a classifiable person (i.e., I don't want to be).[7]

Erikson has described the major goal of adolescence as the formation of a sense of identity. Developmental psychologists, clinicians, and adolescents agree that this process includes: (1) separating from parents, (2) forming new and stronger identifications with peers, (3) establishing relationships with the opposite sex, (4) choosing and pursuing career goals, and (5) integrating individuality in a larger social scheme.

Separation from parents

Distance between parents and children may be triggered initially by a reemergence of family romance fantasies. A daughter may vie with her mother for the father's attention. A son is likely to try to weaken the tie with the mother, because it is not acceptable for a boy to be very attached to his mother. Mothers and fathers will be less upset by rivalries their children feel, and by wishes for distance, if they see these feelings as a necessary part of growing up. Gradually teen-agers challenge and question parental opinions and values in all areas. They may adopt peers' opinions or simply take a position that is the opposite of the parent's view. They may test out long-standing rules to see how parents will react. They may find the parent's most cherished value and behave in a way that flaunts that value. For example, parents who value education may find that their children lose interest in school; parents who enjoy sports may find that their children refuse to participate with them; parents who value neatness and organization may find their children are very sloppy. If parents recognize that these differences are probably temporary, tension can be kept to a minimum.

Children need to separate from parents. Separation is a crucial step in achieving maturity. After the separation is completed, grown children are again able to express openly the love and respect they continue to feel for their parents. Even during the separation process, children care about their parents. In one survey[8] 88 percent of boys and girls between thirteen and nineteen stated that they had a lot of respect for their parents as people. And 80 percent said they respected their parents' opinions and ideas. Fewer than 20 percent of all adolescents surveyed answered that they had "pretty much given up on being able to get along with parents," and only 20 percent said they felt little affection for their parents. Another survey[9] revealed that about two-thirds of young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five consider the family "a very important value." Thus, adolescents who feel little respect, warmth, or consideration for their parents are rarer than parents might imagine. Most children and parents want close relationships. Parents who have the most satisfying relationships with their children are those who are interested in them, understanding, and willing to share activities with teens. John Conger, a noted developmental psychologist, reviewed a substantial body of research and concluded:

> The single most important external influence in aiding or hindering the average adolescent (particularly the younger one) in the accomplishment of

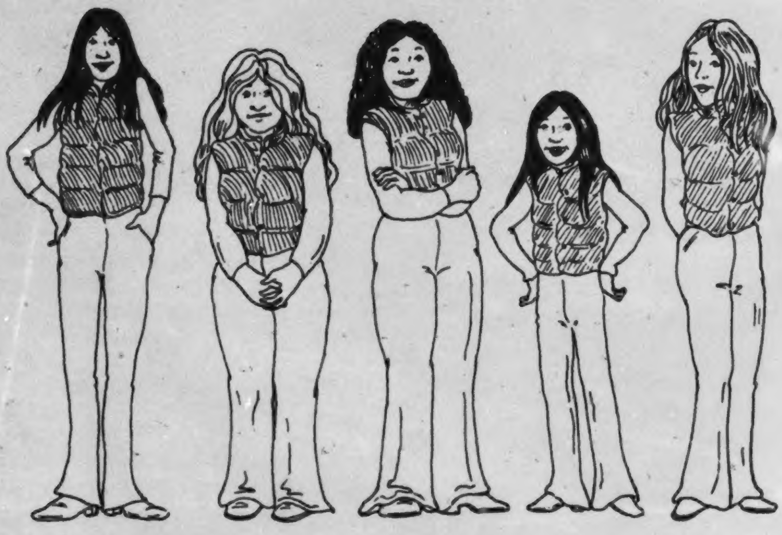
> the developmental tasks of adolescence—at least in today's relatively isolated nuclear family—is his or her parents. The real question is not whether parental models are any longer important; rather, it is what kinds of parental models are necessary and appropriate in preparing contemporary adolescents to cope with the largely unpredictable world of tomorrow.[10]

Identification with peers

The teen years are a period of heightened sociability. Being with peers and being liked and accepted by them take on increased importance. Peer relations can be a source of difficulty if the teen-ager has no close friends or if friends require behavior or traits the child does not want to adopt. All of us can recall lonely times in adolescence, when we felt excluded by the group, and times when we behaved so others would like us, even though inwardly we rebelled.

Friends and communication with them can be major sources of support and growth. Often teen-agers feel they cannot talk to parents to sort out their impressions of events and people, because parents would not understand or would be too critical. However, peers who are confronted with the same developmental problems are a source of sympathy as well as of pertinent information. It is not surprising that teens want to spend a lot of time with each other, discussing the problems of life as well as daily events. The benefits of such contact are described well in the following passage by a teen-ager.

> Close friends can be relaxed with each other and don't need to be aware of their actions. Each can talk freely about emotions and show them. With each other, the two friends have a chance to see themselves wide open; they



> are not afraid of talking too much about themselves. One can say he likes or dislikes someone, and he knows the other won't tell. One can be in a sour mood one day and know that the other will understand. Best friends can complain to each other, and most important, they can act stupid or silly, loud or crazy with one another and understand that there is no need to feel that the silliness endangers the friendship.[11]

Adolescents who are well liked by others share many characteristics. They like other people and are sympathetic and understanding of their problems. They are cheerful, lively, and fun to be around. They like to plan events, and their enthusiasm arouses others. Thus, they make others feel comfortable and accepted by promoting positive social interactions or by planning enjoyable events. Other adolescents are less well liked for a variety of reasons. Some are ignored or neglected because they are social isolates who retreat in nervous shyness. Others arouse antagonisms because they are aggressive, demand attention, are critical and complaining.

There is a strong need among adolescents to conform with their peers in appearance—dress and makeup—and entertainment as well as in patterns of interaction. However, the healthiest teen-agers strike a balance between acceptance of peer values and of parental values. Parents continue to have a significant influence on teen-agers' moral and social values, and on their patterns of interaction with the adult world.

Adolescents who are peer-oriented rather than adult-oriented[12] may be turning to age mates because they lack closeness with adults. Their parents seem to be uninterested in them, neither giving them guidance nor establishing limits. These teen-agers are likely to have low self-esteem, a dimmer view of the future, less interest in making and doing things, and less competence in academic work. They do not appear to find in their peer attachments the emotional warmth and closeness they require to be productive and effective.

Relationships with the opposite sex

Dating Girls, and to some extent boys, seem to go through three stages as they begin to date. In the preadolescent years, they are anxious about the prospect of dating, although they may still be emotionally uninterested in the opposite sex. In early adolescence, focus of the anxiety changes as dating begins, and teenagers feel nervous about measuring up to standards of masculinity and femininity. As they gain more experience, they relax. By the end of adolescence, they feel more comfortable and able to be natural in relationships.

Research[13] suggests that becoming highly involved in dating either too early or too late can reflect problems. Girls eleven to fourteen who were going steady were outgoing and confident but were superficial in their relationships with boys. Because they had not had a chance to develop themselves, they had less to share. Those who were not dating by late adolescence seemed to be immature, socially isolated, and preoccupied with themselves. Conger[14] summarized studies on dating and concludes that teen-agers who are best prepared for the adult roles of worker and partner have had opportunities in adolescence to experience many different social and personal roles. Optimally they will have had close relationships with same-sex and opposite-sex peers. When parents and families are close and provide support, children have the courage to pursue their own interests. These young people are able to postpone, until they are more mature, more permanent and intense emotional attachments with the opposite sex.

Sexual behavior Emerging sexual feelings and the search for appropriate forms of expression for them are primary concerns of the teen years. One of the main tasks of adolescence is to establish satisfying relations with the opposite sex. During these years, teen-agers need to deal with emerging sexual feelings and find appropriate forms of expression for those feelings. This means making choices about sexual activities. The choices are simple for those who are in agreement with parental values of strong limitations on sexual behavior. Others rebel against parental values and want to engage in sexual activity. Some teen-agers want to find a middle path. Decisions about sexual activity are difficult not only because of personal uncertainties but also because of attitude differences between boys and girls.

For many boys, sexual intimacy with girls is a source of pride as well as pleasure. For girls the experience may have a very different meaning, and they may feel pressured into sexual activity.

The difference in attitudes about sex has been summed up in the comment that girls use sex as a means of getting love, and boys use love as a means of getting sex. While this is a generalization and may not apply to a particular boy or girl, it does reflect the fact that boys are easily aroused and highly interested in sex with an urgency not usually acknowledged by girls. These different attitudes have social implications. Because a girl engages in coital activity primarily out of feelings of love, she may assume that a boy feels the same way and has a greater commitment to her than, in fact, he has.

Teens must be aware of the differences in attitudes about sex and guide their behavior accordingly. Boys are aroused by revealing clothes and seductive conversation, and so girls must be aware that such acts are a cruel tease if they do not want to engage in sexual activity. Girls may take casual statements of affection and caring very seriously, and so boys must be aware they can tease and hurt with idle words that reflect no emotional attachment and are said to gain physical affection.

Are high school students ready or able to take on the responsibilities of sexual intimacy? Conger[15] writes that, since adolescence means an increased preoccupation with self, the commitment to others necessary for intimate sexual relations is lacking. One of the partners may be deeply hurt by the inability of the other to be involved. Furthermore, he suggests that identity formation will be cut short by too intense a relationship with a member of the opposite sex during adolescence.

Selecting a vocational goal

At no time is the need for a model more evident than during an adolescent's search for a vocational goal. Most teen-agers do not choose a specific goal at this time, but they do begin to explore the possibilities and narrow the focus of choice. Most researchers believe that the process of making a vocational choice begins during childhood, so by adolescence many children already have some ideas about what interests they may want to pursue. Let's look at the stages in this process, so you will have a sense of how parents participate and influence children's vocational choices.[16]

Childhood is a fantasy period in which children explore many occupations—fireman, policeman, pilot, president. As children move through elementary school, they begin to develop interests and skills that are related to work. At home, they take on many roles. When caring for their clothes and cleaning their rooms, they take on the hotel roles; when preparing food and cleaning up after meals, the restaurant roles; when helping siblings with homework or chores, the teaching roles; when helping plan family activities and vacations, the recreational roles. In school, sports, and scouting activities children develop discipline and establish habits of meeting standards—qualities that are valued in the world of work.

During the adolescent years, as the individual acquires a sense of who she is and what she might like to do, she begins to test and taste various careers. She may study physics, Russian, and weaving in school, and may have an after-school job in a florist shop or a television repair store. In all of these activities she is exploring new fields and learning what she does and does not enjoy. From this information and from other experiences emerge decisions about whether to go on for additional education or training, and about what kind of job to look for.

As individuals move from school to work in the late teens or early twenties, they go through a transition period and then an establishment period. It is during the latter time that men and women make serious commitments to work. There are, of course, wide variations among individuals—some adolescents know, while still in their early teens, what they want to do in their work lives, while other young people choose an occupation later on, after having some work experience.

What is the parent's role in helping a child traverse these different stages? First, the parent who works provides a model. We know that a high percentage of sons follow in their fathers' professional footsteps. A son may be most likely to enter the father's occupation if it is one the child could observe—if, for example, the father is a veterinarian or has a small business. Studies[17] show a relationship between the example of a father who is happy and satisfied in his work and a son's occupational adjustment and success in adulthood. Girls, too, model their work commitments on their mother's examples.[18] Daughters of working women are more likely to plan to work when they are married than girls whose mothers do not work. The parent need not have a job to serve as a work model. If a mother or father has stimulating interests, such as hobbies and community activities, children have the example of a disciplined and accomplished person to copy. Fathers who do not earn much money or achieve high status can still be excellent models because of their interests and their commitments to what they enjoy.

PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES

General guidelines

The strategists whose work is discussed in this book, including the behaviorists Eimers and Aitchison,[19] agree that parents need to provide many opportunities for meaningful communication of feelings between parent and child, and for self-direction by teen-agers. And parents must provide models of responsible behavior. On less important matters—hair styles, clothing, and friends—teen-agers can and do make their choices without parental supervision. Parents may not like or approve of these choices, but they should accept them unless these decisions have demonstrable effects on parents. Ginott[20] emphasizes that teen-agers should be given the rights of adulthood. Parents should respect teen-agers' privacy, refuse to preach to them about their duties and obligations, and give teens the respect due a peer. When parents observe a characteristic that needs changing, they should tempt the child "to live up to his or her potential." Every parent should learn to offer choices—"You decide whether you will do it," or "The choice is yours."

Gordon[21] emphasizes that, in addition to being models and communicators of feelings, parents are consultants. To be one, first, get all the facts on a subject from as many viewpoints as possible. Children, like everyone else, must be convinced before they can change. Then, ask your children if they are interested in hearing the information you have gathered. Suggest to them that they set a convenient time so you can present the material. After you have passed on what you have learned, permit them to arrive at their own conclusions. Allow time for discussion, and practice active listening as your children respond.

Briggs[22] emphasizes that parents must not give children reasons to feel guilty about wanting to separate from parents. Parents need to recognize when it is time for teen-agers to rely as much on peers as on themselves. She stresses the usefulness of a sense of humor in easing the ups and downs of life with adolescents. A good laugh at the funny side of a frustrating incident can restore a cheerful family atmosphere. And that increases the likelihood of finding a reasonable solution. Keep an eye on the long-term goals, and you will be less distressed by daily problems. Parents wonder how teen-agers will ever manage the duties of adult life. Remember that most adolescents do develop into stable and mature adults. Rebellion and disorganization are ordinary phases that young people pass through on the way to adulthood.

Shirley Gould,[23] who applies Dreikurs to the adolescent years, emphasizes the importance of parents' accepting their own imperfections. When they can accept themselves as worthwhile persons even though they make mistakes, parents will be more understanding and accepting of their children. When parents do not accept themselves, they become overly upset by any problems children experience. When a child has trouble, these parents experience guilt, a mixture of failure, shame, blame, and depression. If these feelings are intense, they can trigger a variety of responses. Parents may become defensive and offer excuses for why the child is having trouble or why they, themselves, are worried. They may verbally attack others, often children, hoping to stimulate guilt in them. Parents may withdraw and say nothing, holding the guilt in, or they may cry long and hard, giving up any chance to control what is happening.

If parents understand the purpose of guilt feelings, they may be better able to handle them. Gould believes guilt feelings are attempts to: (1) control others and force them to do what you want, (2) demonstrate suffering in order to get appreciation from others, (3) punish oneself, (4) get sympathy, and (5) prove one's worth.

Guilt, she believes, is mainly a sign of good intentions that we wanted to succeed but were unable to accomplish our goals. Accepting that we will fall short of our goals, and dealing with guilt as outlined in the first chapter, enables individuals to get on with the business of living in a confident, constructive, productive manner.

Family contracting

Eimers and Aitchison[24] advocate communication of feelings between parents and teen-agers. A major tool for handling problems is the family contracting session. Children and parents make up "want lists" of specific behaviors that each wants from the others, and they arrange to trade behaviors so each person gets some desired changes. The trades are written into a contract, which can be modified, if necessary. For example, a teen-ager may want (1) to use the car more frequently on weekend nights, (2) to wear his hair longer, and (3) to have privacy in his own room when he retreats there. Parents may want (1) more help with the dishes and lawn mowing, (2) music played at a lower volume, and (3) no more profanity. Parents and teen-ager can sign a contract saying if the son does the dishes nightly and mows the lawn once a week, plays music at a lower volume and does not swear, he may have the car on Friday and Saturday nights and may have his hair cut as he likes.

Many parents find it difficult to accept a limited role during the teen years, when children's decisions can have serious consequences. Yet the agreement among all strategists is impressive. At no other age period is there such uniformity of opinion about the appropriate path for parents. Parents of teen-agers are advised to be models for their children, stimulators of communication, and consultants. Conger, summarizing a variety of studies, describes methods of effective parenting and why they succeed.

> Democratic practices, with frequent explanation by parents of their rules of conduct and expectations, foster responsible independence learning in several ways: (1) by providing opportunities for increasing autonomy, guided by interested parents who communicate with the child and exercise appropriate degrees of control; (2) by promoting positive identification with the parent, based on love and respect for the child, rather than rejection or indifference; and (3) by themselves providing models of reasonable independence, that is, autonomy within the framework of a democratic order.[24]

We have relied on research and experts to tell us what children need. But in this age period children's opinions are at least as objective and insightful. What do they think? A bright, perceptive teen-age girl, Tina deVaron, has described the parents' role in the teen-age years. She describes the basic problems of the period as: (1) learning to control intense and variable emotions, particularly anger, and (2) learning effective ways of interacting with people and situations. She says the teen years are turbulent because of the changes we have already described, and because teen-agers often feel helpless to handle the conflicts but feel a strong need to be independent.

Parents can help by providing reasonable limits based on the particular child's level of maturity. If parents give too much freedom, the child feels that no one cares; if parents give too little freedom, teen-agers do not learn to deal with emotions and with people. Parents should also be concerned listeners who provide emotional support during this period when children often are self-critical. However, parents must not simply submit to teen-agers' demands. Tina says that, in her confusion over what was wise and what was ridiculous, she sometimes made outrageous demands on her parents. She feels it is important for parents to remain calm. If her parents gave in quickly to a silly request, or if they reprimanded her in a critical tone, she became more unsure of herself. Since adolescents are not always in control of their feelings and reactions, parents can bring a sense of perspective to the situation if they remain in control.

Tina concludes with the following comment:

> Now that I'm sixteen, and can look back on my growing up, I see parents as valuable in two ways. I am learning to live with others and myself at the same time, and if I have difficulties, they will not walk out on me if I get a little hard to live with. They are also my blood relations, they have known me longer and better than anyone else. Because of this, I can be sure that they, above all others, will stand behind me if I get in a bind. The love they gave me as a child has helped to reinforce this feeling, and helped me to feel how important we are to each other.[26]

These several perspectives outline a difficult course. Parents must grant freedom but establish firm limits that protect the child. There will be times when a child's safety is at risk and parents feel they must act. There are no hard and fast rules about when to let a child make an independent decision and when to step in and set a firm limit. Parents who examine ways of handling the specific problems described in this chapter will find guidelines for when to grant independence and when to set limits. However, each incident needs to be judged on its own merit with the beginning assumption that a teen-ager will be making independent choices unless circumstances are unusual.

The usual problems of adolescence are intensified by behavioral problems of childhood. If parents have been overprotective or neglecting, children will have greater difficulty making and carrying out independent decisions. If teen-agers have never had satisfying friendships with important emotional interchanges, they will be poorly prepared to handle the difficulties of achieving peer acceptance, and they may acquiesce easily to peer pressure. When control of impulses and physical activity has always been hard, teen-agers will find it hard to cope with the excess push to action that many feel during these years.

David Elkind[27] has pointed out adolescents may try to pay parents back for treatment they felt was unfair when they were younger. As young people achieve increasing capacity to earn their own money, physical equality with parents, and freedom to drive and do things for themselves, many feel that they are, at last, on somewhat equal footing with parents. If they have felt mistreated, now they are capable of redressing the imbalance between what parents have demanded and what they have given. Nevertheless, most teen-agers do want good relationships, and family ties can be strengthened during these years.

The problems encountered during adolescence relate to physical and intellectual functioning, social behavior, and family interactions. Among the most prevalent and difficult are those associated with family, school, friends, and social behavior—shyness, dress, sexual activity, and limit setting—curfew, and the use of alcohol and drugs.

Dress and physical appearance

In matters of dress and physical appearance, all strategists agree that the choices belong to the teen-ager except under special circumstances. Accepting such an approach is not easy for many parents. One father wanted his children to dress to please his peer group, not theirs. When he thought about the problem, he realized that his children were individuals who were also trying to please their peer group. He accepted their desire to be like their friends and said no more about the issue.

Special circumstances will permit parents a greater say in the matter. For example, if teen-agers are going to attend a function made up of parents' friends, then the young people will dress to be more acceptable in that group. If they feel they cannot, parents might ask them to stay home. When adolescents see that what they do has a specific effect on the parents, they often will change, as seen in an example cited by Gordon. The father, a school principal, felt his son's long hair jeopardized his job in a conservative city. When he explained the tangible effect of his son's appearance on him, the boy cut his hair.

Drugs and alcohol

Even when teen-agers get involved in activities that could affect health, increase accidents, or lead to legal penalties, parents are urged to avoid anger, resist name-calling, sarcasm, and labeling. Dodson[28] has a four-step method for handling the problems of drugs, including marijuana. First, do not assume your child is interested or involved in drugs, and do not give lectures on the dangers of drugs. Second, get accurate information about drugs, so you can discuss them intelligently with your children. Often children know in detail all the studies that support their point of view, and so you must be knowledgeable about all points of view. Third, be honest with your children about any unwise habits of your own. Teens often justify their behavior by pointing to parents' smoking, alcohol, or pill intake. If your behavior in any of these areas is excessive, say so and indicate that you wish you could change your habits.

Fourth, do not pry into your child's life to discover whether the child is using drugs. If your child does use drugs, his or her behavior will change, and you can discuss this with the child. If you discover your child is using drugs, discuss a possible solution, using mutual problem-solving techniques. If this does not work, seek professional counseling.

The use of marijuana is becoming increasingly common among young people and is the cause of many problems. In almost all places in the United States, growing and using marijuana are illegal and penalties are severe. But teens are often under pressure from their peers to "smoke a joint," a practice that may be as common as having a beer. Many teens see their parents smoke and drink, and see little difference between those activities and smoking marijuana. As noted earlier in this chapter, teen-agers tend to feel immune from the consequences of their actions and so may be unwilling to consider the potential for personal disaster in an activity that seems harmless.

How should parents handle this complicated situation? One father discovered that his son, with some friends, was growing a plot of marijuana. The father provided his son with information about the illegality of growing and using marijuana, and about research findings on the short- and long-term effects of using marijuana. And the father expressed his feelings about what the boy was doing. In other words, this father limited his role in this situation to that of a consultant. This parent felt that, as long as the son was not doing anything to endanger the parents, what the boy did was for him to decide, on the basis of adequate information. If the boy had been growing the marijuana at home, then the parents and their son would have had a mutual problem-solving session.

The drinking of alcoholic beverages presents different problems. The most obvious and perhaps most significant difference between the use of marijuana and the use of alcohol is that many—probably most—teen-agers see their parents drink. And in those situations where teen-age drinking is against the law, the legal penalties are less severe than the penalties for growing and/or possessing marijuana. Nevertheless, teen-age drinking can lead to automobile accidents that cause permanent injury and death, for the drinker and his companions, and for his victims. How can parents—especially parents who drink—handle their teen-agers' drinking? Ginott makes two suggestions. First, parents can try to increase children's self-esteem and self-confidence, to combat the feelings of inadequacy and the tendency to impulsiveness that often leads to drinking. Second, they can try to remove the air of mystery that surrounds drinking, by making it an accepted part of family occasions and celebrations. Cultures that permit children to drink as part of ceremonial or formal occasions seem to have lower rates of alcoholism.

Parents are then encouraged to supply teen-agers with guidelines to help them to learn to live with drinking or nondrinking as they choose: Sip drinks slowly and eat while drinking. Never ride in a car with a driver who is high and never operate a car if you feel high—instead ask a friend to drive or call a cab.

School problems

Teen-agers cut classes; they ignore homework assignments; they fail to complete courses; they pick courses that will not prepare them for what they say they want to do; they drop out of school. All strategists advise parents to move cautiously. School work and college and vocational choices fall in the areas where children make choices. However, parents can be helpful consultants. Parents can place responsibility on children, question the source of the problem, seek remedies, and support children's coping techniques by reminding them of earlier successes. They can also communicate their feelings about the seriousness of the situation and the importance of dealing with it. This approach takes more time than criticism or advice on how to improve.

Gould reports a school problem handled in a similar way even though the consequences were serious. Peter, fourteen and a freshman in high school, began to cut classes. His parents, both college graduates with advanced degrees, emphasized education. But when Peter reached the age where he could drop out of school, he asked them to sign the required form and they did so. They realized they could not make him study or enjoy school. Peter got a job and supported himself while he continued to live at home. Eventually, he decided he needed more education, and returned to school at night to get his high school diploma. Then Peter asked his parents to support him while he went to college full time. His parents insisted that he show some signs of determination, and he completed two semesters, paying for half his expenses himself. Then they paid for the rest of his college education.

Fitzhugh Dodson cites an example of how parents can be consultants in helping children with courses of study. He received the following letter:

> My son is sixteen and he just despises the academic aspects of school (and 90 percent of it is academic). The only things he likes are wood shop, metal shop, auto mechanics, and P.E. He does poorly in all of his academic subjects. But he is very good with hands. He loves to take his car apart and work on it, and he's terrific when it comes to fixing our TV set or tinkering with radios or CBs. But college is coming up soon, and I don't know what to do.[29]

Dodson advises getting information on community colleges or trade schools nearby since the son sounds like he is suited for a skilled trade. Show the young man the variety of skilled trades and how to get some training in whatever one appeals to him. Dodson concludes with this comment: "Some parents have a snobbish resistance to the idea of their son or daughter learning a skilled trade instead of going to an academic college. I think this is a mistake. Better a good auto mechanic, happy at his job, than an unhappy and inept teacher or insurance salesman."[30]

Shyness

Most adolescents are shy, and shyness is most troubling in the teen years, when popularity is so important. Philip Zimbardo[21] has written a book, *Shyness*, and has organized a clinic to help people overcome shyness. He gives the following suggestions for parents who want to help their shy children.

First, parents need to express love and emotional support with specific positive statements. This requires focusing on the child's strengths. Second, encourage the child to express his thoughts and feelings and to pay attention to the reactions of other people. In games and exercises, parents can show how easy it is to misperceive what others think. This is an important lesson for shy people, who often assume others think negatively of them. Zimbardo suggests a family game in which one member reads a brief description of an event, then whispers his version to the next member and so around the circle. Comparing the last version with the written statement is informative, because children can see that in taking in information, we alter it somewhat, and no one has a true, objective picture of someone else or an event.

Parents can also encourage their teen-agers to be active and independent, to help others, work cooperatively on projects, to do their own laundry. Children also need to learn that mistakes can be corrected—when they realize this, the fear of failure that is so immobilizing is dissipated. When a child learns to be comfortable in solitary activities, that child is less likely to be upset by fear of rejection. If being alone is fun, there is less reason to worry about not being part of a group.

Parents can also encourage active reaching out to other people. They can suggest children start conversations—for example, while waiting in lines or while waiting for class to start. They can learn to listen carefully to what others say and to give sincere compliments. If a shy child faces a particularly difficult situation, parents can help the child rehearse and anticipate some of the things the other person may say. The coaching suggested by Sherri Oden and Steve Asher[32] in Chapter Nine is appropriate here, too.

Curfew

Once children have friends, they want to stay out. When adolescents come home after the agreed upon time, parents worry. Ginott and Gordon both recommend expressing the fear and worry that underlie the anger parents often express when children are late. One parent who had been following Ginott varied the curfew with the occasion and encouraged her daughter to call if she were to be late. The mother told the girl that she would like a worry-free evening; the girl accepted her parent's concern and called.

Krumboltz and Krumboltz[33] describe an active way to handle lateness. Parents can set an alarm clock for fifteen minutes after the curfew. If the child is home, then he or she turns off the alarm before it goes off. If the child is still out, the alarm alerts the parents. Dodson, using behavioral principles, suggests overlooking lateness of fifteen or twenty minutes. He says if children come home forty-five minutes or an hour late, then parents can make a ruckus.

A more unusual curfew problem was cited by Briggs. A teen-ager asked her mother to come downstairs five minutes after she came home from a dance with her boy friend and insist that she come to bed. When the mother asked why, the daughter said the boy liked to "make out," and she was not interested. The mother came down as instructed and delivered her message. As she went upstairs, she heard her daughter whisper, "She's a drag, isn't she?" Briggs explains that the daughter needed a scapegoat, so that her denial seemed not to be what she wanted but what she was forced to do. Briggs advises parents to help children be assertive, clear about what they want, and able to communicate that in a gentle but firm way.

Express your concern about the child's welfare. Adjust curfews if they are unreasonable. If lateness is habitual, this should be discussed in a family session.

Choice of friends

By the time children reach their teens, they are aware of the qualities that their parents value in people. They are also, more than ever before in their lives, subject to pressures from their peers. And they are experiencing for the first time the strong

and unfamiliar stirrings of sexual feelings. Small wonder, then, that our teens—pushed and pulled by these many influences—often seem to pick friends we find less than desirable.

Sometimes they are wiser and more discerning than we are. The quiet girl who dresses in dull colors turns out, on closer acquaintance, to be bright and kind and gentle, and interesting too. The very tall, fidgety boy with all those freckles and a strange laugh, we learn after a few weeks, is good with cars and even better with pets—and not afraid to express his affection for animals or people, or food.

But what should parents do when a teen-ager is swept off her good sense by a Robert Redford look-alike who is, nevertheless, inconsiderate and insensitive, or an adolescent son who can suddenly think, and talk, about nothing but what the parent sees as an empty-headed cheerleader?

All the strategies discussed in this book agree that parents should not intervene directly, to forbid or end a relationship. Instead, they should do what behaviorists call "letting the behavior run its course." The child's choice is respected, and the child respects the parents' feelings. The strategies differ on how parents should express their reservations. The possibilities include waiting to comment, refusing to encourage or facilitate the relationship, and arranging situations in which the child can see the problem as the parents do.

When teens pick same-sex friends with different values, parents may worry that their children will be led into situations they can not handle—heavy drinking, speeding in cars, cutting school. Parents should first examine their own reactions. Is the friend really likely to create trouble for your child? Or are you objecting to less important characteristics, such as appearance and manners.

If you are objecting because the friend has a terrible driving record, cuts school frequently, or is failing courses, sit down and share your concerns with your teen-ager. Respect the child's right to have this friend, but point out the possible consequences to your child. If not pressured, the child will be able to understand what you are saying and may begin to spend less time with the friend. If the two continue to spend time together, it is possible that the friend may change. It is also possible that, as you get to know the friend, you may begin to understand why your child values this friendship. If the friendship continues and trouble does result for your child or seems about to occur, you may want to take action to end the relationship by forbidding it. This is difficult to enforce if the teen is determined to see the friend. However, in some situations this firm action may be what your child wants.

Ginott tells of a situation in which parents gave their teen-ager freedom of choice, yet exerted influence by raising questions for her to consider. Their eighteen-year-old daughter felt she had met the boy of her dreams. Her mother worried she was being swept away in a world of fantasy and physical attraction, and was not asking practical questions about how compatible they might be in a permanent relationship. However, the mother did not raise these issues while her daughter was up in the clouds. She waited for the best time to suggest realistic considerations. This mother is likely to be able to exert an influence because she is able to empathize with her daughter's feeling and recognize that in the throes of romance, she is not interested in the many practical questions that must be answered as the relationship goes along.

Gould cites the example of a boy in his late teens who became interested in a girl his parents disapproved of. Gould advises being pleasant to the girl, but says the parents do not need to lend the car for dates nor entertain her in their home.

In another example, described by Krumboltz and Krumboltz[34] a couple found that their sixteen-year-old daughter was serious about an older boy they disliked and they feared an early marriage would occur. They thought the boy was insensitive, inconsiderate, and selfish, and were worried because their daughter wanted to go steady. Instead of forbidding the relationship, they invited the boy to eat all weekday dinners with them and to spend time on weekends going on family excursions. The parents came to like certain qualities in the boy, but after three months, their daughter ended the relationship and started dating other boys. Treated this way, the incident might have had other outcomes, but all of them would have been positive. The boy might have changed as he spent more time with the girl's family; the parents might have been wrong in their view of the boy, and might have become convinced he was likeable when they got to know him; the boy might have rejected the daughter as he came to know the family. Or given the freedom to choose and ample opportunities to get to know the young man, the daughter might have become even more involved—but she would have done so without any pressure from her parents.

Sexual behavior

Many parents worry that if they provide birth control information they will be encouraging promiscuity. What can parents do to protect the child while advocating their values? Ginott wrote before the increase in teen-age pregnancies. He suggests that teen-agers need sex education consisting of information and values. Parents provide as much information as they feel comfortable discussing and refer teen-agers to doctors or other professionals who can answer other questions. Parents discuss their values, but they do not supply contraceptive devices for their children. Ginott believes it is the teen-ager's responsibility to obtain contraceptive devices, and that the teen-agers who fail to do so show immaturity and lack of readiness for sexual activity. Other strategists agree that parents should provide factual information and values, but some recommend going with the teen-ager to the doctor or clinic. Dodson recommends this active approach. One million teen-age girls get pregnant each year. Katherine Oettinger[35] discusses teen-age pregnancy and how to handle it in *Not My Daughter.* Parents and daughter must consider the circumstances, the maturity of the partners, and the emotional and financial supports available. Professionals emphasize that once a teen-age girl is pregnant, there are no simple, easy alternatives. It is important that everyone communicate feelings openly, consider all the alternatives, and keep a clear focus on handling the problem without making accusations or placing blame.

Venereal disease is another problem being experienced by an increasing number of teen-agers. Ginott describes the case of a mother who was horrified when confronted with the possibility that her daughter might have gonorrhea. However, the mother did not blame or criticize the child. She remained calm and talked about what they would do—see the doctor, get the diagnosis, and obtain treatment if necessary. Of primary importance from any perspective is dealing with the infection. Then the girl must decide whether and how she will protect herself in the future. If this is a divisive issue for family members, then family counseling would be in order.

Delinquency or responsibility?

As teen-agers become more independent, they want more privileges but often also want fewer responsibilities. The average teen-ager does not hesitate to ask to use the family car, but is also likely to have a disorderly room and no interest in washing the dinner dishes. More and more teen-agers are going beyond the kinds of behavior your parents may have thought appropriate when you were in your teens—like staying out late and having a beer after bowling—and are drinking or using drugs, or both. And many are leaving home at an age when that can still be considered running away.

All the strategists discussed in this book agree on some principles to be kept in mind when coping with the problems that result from the growing independence of teen-agers. Parents need to grant freedom of choice, particularly in clothes, entertainment, and friends. They must also set limits by stating their views and what they want and insisting that those limits and values be incorporated in solutions. Communication and sensitivity, expressed through active listening and in family councils, continue to be essential ingredients in the relationships between parents and children.

Let us start with keeping one's room clean. In family or contracting sessions, parents and children can discuss their wants and reach agreement about how often rooms are cleaned and the rewards that follow. Gordon tells of one family who made a happy trade. The daughter suggested that, since she liked to cook and her mother preferred to clean, she would cook dinner and do dishes two nights a week in exchange for her mother cleaning her room regularly. The mother agreed, happy to be able to clean the room to meet her own standards.

Conflicts arise around work. Ginott gives the example of a woman whose son was offered a job as art director of a camp. She thought it was an ideal job for him, but he was reluctant to take it. She had a hard time not urging him to take the job. But she realized that he had to make his own choice, that her task was to observe silently from the sidelines unless he asked for her opinion.

Gould tells of a nineteen-year-old who wanted to stay at college during the summer and earn money there, although his parents wanted him to work in the family business. They felt he owed it to them to do that, because they had been paying his college expenses and providing spending money. After discussing the matter with Gould, the parents decided to give their son his college expenses and a limited amount of spending money, with no strings attached. The boy learned that he could not have everything he wanted from his parents, but he was free to spend his time as he pleased. His respect for his parents and himself grew as he became more independent and relied less on his parents.

Often the needs of parent and child conflict. Ginott tells of the problem one mother had with her teen-age daughter, who charged an expensive dress to the mother's account. The daughter was excited and pleased with the choice, but the mother was upset at the expense. She calmly insisted that the girl take the dress back. The mother reflected the daughter's feelings about not wanting to return the dress but was firm, and the girl took it back. Gordon would have problem-solved the situation to see if there were some way that the daughter could have earned the money for the dress, so that she could have kept it but the mother would not have paid for it.

Gordon cites many examples in which problem-solving is used to meet the needs of all family members. And he tells of a situation that occurred in his own family. When his daughter was fifteen, she told her parents she wanted to spend Easter vacation at a beach with friends her own age. Her parents were afraid of what might go on during an unsupervised vacation, with boys and liquor, but their daughter discounted their worries. Through active listening, they discovered she wanted (1) to spend the vacation with a particular friend, (2) to be near a beach so she could have a tan when she returned to school, and (3) possibly to meet boys. She suggested that her parents take her and the girl friend to an area where the parents could enjoy golf, and she and her friends could go to the beach each day. The parents had not had a vacation, and they were delighted—and everyone had a good time. Note that parents do not automatically go along with a child's request when they think it could involve danger. Instead, parents and children all work together to find an acceptable alternative.

Briggs makes a unique suggestion. She advises talking to children who are about to be teen-agers, as well as to their brothers and sisters, concerning the difficulties of adolescence. Siblings may be more understanding and less provocative and teasing with teen-agers. The adolescents are forewarned and not so surprised when they have mood swings and feel a need to explode or to go off by themselves.

Role-playing can help teen-agers rehearse new and possibly fearful situations. Krumboltz and Krumboltz tell of a father who helped his adolescent daughter prepare for pressure from her friends to smoke marijuana. She did not want to, nor did she want to seem square. The father took the role of pressuring friend. The girl stood her ground and came up with answers that suited her.

Many parents are afraid that if fighting escalates in the family, teen-agers will run away. Both Gordon and Krumboltz and Krumboltz give examples of how such problems can be handled. Gordon[36] tells of a family in which two teen-agers, both on drugs, ran away from home, after months of fighting with their parents about friends, cutting school, and drug use. The parents had tried psychiatric counseling for one boy and psychiatric hospitalization for the other after a drug overdose. The teens found that being independent at fourteen and sixteen was extremely difficult, and before long they returned home. The parents began to use Gordon's parent effectiveness principles. Although they were awkward in active listening, they tried expressing feelings, and gradually the family atmosphere changed. Initially, laughter and teasing followed the active listening, but parents continued to tell the children their reactions to what was going on. I-messages were difficult to send, but gradually everyone learned to state their feelings and concerns clearly. The mother felt the problems of the two older children could have been avoided if she and her husband had learned these skills earlier.

Krumboltz and Krumboltz cite the case of Frank, a sixteen-year-old boy who had been a quiet but somewhat surly teen-ager. He ran away with a friend, leaving no explanation, no address. Three weeks later the police found the two boys working in another city and contacted their parents. Frank's parents conferred with the police, the high school principal, and a swimming coach of the boy's team, and then decided to let Frank stay where he was. The police kept an eye on the boys but did not talk with them. A week later Frank returned home and his parents welcomed him warmly. He said he realized he needed an education to get a decent job and had decided to finish school. The cooperation of the police, who watched out for the boys' welfare but did not interfere, enabled the parents to let the boy's behavior run its course.

Many parents may believe these general principles are fine as long as serious acting out is not involved. But they think that when teen-agers break the law and get in serious trouble, other approaches—including severe punishment—are required. However, research suggests that the techniques just discussed are equally valuable with delinquent teen-agers.

In addition, the Squires—a group of convicts at San Quentin—concur with the parenting strategists reviewed in this chapter. For the past fourteen years, these men have brought groups of delinquents into the prison for three sessions. During these sessions the Squires show the boys the prison and prison life, and discuss with them where their delinquency is leading and what they can do to change their lives. On occasion, they bring parents in with their children.

When asked to describe what they consider helpful strategies of parenting, the Squires encourage parents to model approved behaviors, to open lines of communication, and to spend time interacting with teen-agers. Honesty is an important ingredient of the relationship. If parents feel punishments are necessary, the Squires recommend against grounding and suggest additional work. To cement the relationship, they advise parents to work along with their teen-agers in joint projects. One convict gave an excellent definition of a parent: "The job of a parent is not to be a cop, preacher, judge, or even a perfect parent; but that of a loving, concerned guide, to provide direction that will allow your kids to be whole, stable, mature adults."

FACILITATING DEVELOPMENT

Again, the major task of adolescence is to form a sense of identity based on (1) growing independence from the family, (2) satisfying peer relations with both the same-sex and opposite-sex peers, (3) selecting possible work interests and roles, and (4) relating to the adult world. Parents serve as communicators, models, consultants, and limit-setters. They can be most helpful by providing objective information and being available for questions as children apply this information in their lives. Teen-agers want their parents' opinions and insights, but they also want to make up their own minds.

Sexual Information

All too often parents fail to provide their children with information about sex. One survey[37] of college students showed that the students received only 15.5 percent of their information about sex from their parents. Mothers talked to daughters about menstruation and reproduction, but fathers supplied only about 2 percent of the facts. Most often children got information from peers.

In addition to supplying factual information about the physiology of sex, parents help children form values. Parents need to discuss their own values with their teen-age children, not dictating attitudes but presenting points of view that their children may not have considered. Parents need not worry about presenting a conservative view—many teen-agers want to hear just that. If you are concerned about seeming old-fashioned, remember that about 25 percent of boys and 40 percent of girls wish, in retrospect, that they had waited longer before being sexually active.

If you find sexual matters too difficult to discuss with teen-age children, it is best to say that to them honestly and then suggest that they talk to a counselor or a doctor. For example, you might say, "I'd like to answer your questions about sex without getting all flustered, but frankly I can't. As I grew up, this subject wasn't discussed and I feel uncomfortable with it. I'll answer the questions I can, even if I flounder, and I'll get books for fuller details. I only hope you'll be more relaxed talking about this subject when you're a parent."[38]

After your teen-ager has appropriate information, you need to be sure that she understands what she has learned and knows how to apply it to her own experiences. Has she thought about your views and her own on sexual values and behaviors? Does she—or he—understand fully the implications of not using contraceptives? Does she have enough assertiveness, self-esteem, and skill in interpersonal communications to assure that she will be able to withstand pressure when she feels uncertain or vulnerable? These are important decisions and experiences and moments in the lives of young people. You can perhaps help most, not by telling them what to do and what not to do, but by making sure they have the information they need and the confidence to use what they have learned about themselves and about sex to make wise decisions.

Briggs reminds us that the best insurance for healthy sexual behavior is high self-esteem:

> A sense of personal values insulates a youngster from selling himself short and lessens interest in irresponsible sexual behavior. The youngster who likes himself seeks wholesome relationships that nourish self-esteem rather than meaningless ones that tear it apart. Belief in himself makes a youngster less wary of commitment—he knows he can handle it. And he is freer to take a firm stand on moral issues. And his self-respect makes him seek others who handle their lives similarly.[39]

Vocational plans

The ways that parents can help teen-agers make vocational plans are similar to the ways they help adolescents make choices about sexual activity. Parents can provide factual information about expanding fields and possible careers, about the personal qualities and interests needed to do various kinds of work, and about how teen-agers can get more information and test their interests. Parents can also provide information about possible occupations based on their observation of children's skills and interests. Teen-agers may have overlooked some qualities in themselves or not seen the relevance of some interests to work. Ginott has an excellent section on the importance of parental appreciation of those very special acts and traits that can only be seen at home, and about the need to tell children about their special talents.

Parents also can help children develop the interpersonal skills and the self-confidence that will enable them to pursue vocational goals. They can talk about how to prepare for interviews, how to present abilities and special qualifications for a job, how to remain at ease in an interview. At times of failure and frustration, parents can offer encouragement and suggest alternative actions. However, as children make choices, parents must stand back and keep silent.

In the past, parents have encouraged a commitment to work for boys but not for girls. Today more women work before marriage, more return to work after the birth of a child, and more return to work after the childbearing years. Because work is now a more important part of a woman's life across the life span, parents are wise to encourage their daughters to search for meaningful work that they can enjoy. Some women choose not to marry. Others choose not to have children. And some have interests and talents that lead them to choose to put career ahead of family. Even women who choose to leave the work force during childbearing years will benefit later from having an occupation that brings pleasure and satisfaction.

Parental changes

As new identities are formed, teen-agers need confirmation from parents and the society at large that these identities are valued. Such confirmation comes from respectful treatment, but it also comes from work and activities that reinforce the teen-agers' feelings of competence. At the very time when changes are rapid and children's needs are great, many parents experience midlife crises. Men may be dissatisfied with their occupational achievements and style of life. As children leave home and women have more time, they may wish they had broader horizons. Both husbands and wives may have gnawing feelings that life has not given them what they want and perhaps never will. On the other hand, many parents find that their children's growing independence leaves them free to explore possibilities in their own lives—to travel, to take new jobs, to develop new interests. Parents, then, may have varying reactions to their teen-agers, who are young and ready to embark on all kinds of adventures. If they are unhappy in their own lives, they may feel envious of their children and find it hard to accept the increasing freedom teen-agers have. If parents feel a corresponding freedom and sense of choice in their own lives, they may be especially understanding of their adolescents' dilemmas. Parents' reactions to their teen-agers' behavior stimulates their own personal growth. George Vaillant writes, "In his discovery of his adolescent children, the adult remembers, rediscovers, and often defensively reworks parts of himself. Like the character disorder and infant, the adolescent has the capacity to get under our skin, rekindle old flames, and to stimulate parents in parts of their innermost selves that they had forgotten existed. These fresh identifications act as catalysts for change within adult personalities and allow for further growth."[40]

SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development of teen-agers. As children approach maturity, their intellectual level of thinking advances and they seek new levels of intimacy with peers. They become more independent of parents, no longer seeking advice and guidance, but finding their own solutions to many day-to-day problems.

We have looked at a sampling of problem behaviors and seen that all strategists agree on a general approach to parenting teen-agers. They all emphasize parental modeling, communication of feelings, serving as consultants to provide accurate information, and giving freedom for self-direction while providing limits to insure the child's safety in a period of vulnerability and strong demands for adaptation.

Maturation does not proceed smoothly, and teens sometimes demand freedom just after insisting they be cared for. A sense of humor is essential during these years, as children grope their way to adulthood. Humor of the kind seen in Erma Bombeck's columns can help parents over the rough spots. A humorous response can save a situation that otherwise might turn into a quarrel. With humor, the adolescent years can be a period of growth for both child and parent.

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11

Parenting / working

In most cultures and for most of human history, both men and women have been economic producers in the family. In rural, nonindustrialized societies women have been able to produce goods for sale while they reared children at home. We ignore this when we view as "traditional" the nuclear family, in which the husband goes out to work and the wife stays home to rear children, as the model for family structure. Such a structure is relatively new, an invention of industrialization and the twentieth century. When women enter the work force to help provide for their families, as they do in increasing numbers, they are, in fact, following time-honored tradition.

Many rewards can come to all family members when both parents work outside the home. Children can increase in responsibility, self-esteem, and competence as they learn to meet their own needs and contribute to the well-being of all family members. Fathers can increase in emotional awareness and expressiveness as they learn to care for their children. Mothers can grow in independence and self-confidence as they encounter the challenges of paid work. However, to achieve the positive benefits of a more complex and stimulating life style, parents must be aware of possible difficulties and ways of handling them. In this chapter we examine the stresses that can occur, particularly for mothers, who must make the most changes. Each family member can help to solve problems and can reap the benefits that accrue when both wife and husband combine employment and parenting.

In the past thirty years women have demonstrated increasing interest in a return to the role of economic contributor to the family even if they must leave the home to do this. Several factors are responsible for this growing desire for paid employment. The average woman now can expect to live into her eighties. The roles of childbearer and caregiver are reduced. Health advances result in a much higher proportion of children surviving to adulthood, so parents do not have to have large numbers to insure that a smaller number grow to maturity. As the population has grown, social pressure has developed to control the number of new lives. That pressure and more effective methods of birth control have reduced the birth rate.

Because women spend a smaller segment of the life span rearing fewer children, many now want productive work outside the home to make their lives more meaningful. Furthermore, economic conditions have changed and many families now need two incomes. Because of inflation, fewer men have jobs that will support a family. When divorce occurs, as it does with increasing frequency, women may have to support children. And so women have sought paid employment in large numbers. Approximately 58 percent of women living with husbands and children under eighteen work, and 37 percent of women living with husbands and children under six, are employed. The percentages are higher in single-parent families.[1]

WOMEN AND WORK

Many women do not have a choice about working—they must work because they need the money, because of inflation, because of husbands' unemployment, or because they are separated or divorced. Even though money is the main reason for working, many women report psychological rewards from work.

What psychological rewards do women get out of work? Several are reported. Accomplishing specific tasks increases feelings of self-esteem and competence. Even women whose paid employment is similar to work done in the home experience satisfaction—they enjoy the feedback from employer, and interaction with coworkers as well as the tangible reward of a paycheck. Thus, women with service jobs—waitresses and salesclerks, for example—report the same feelings of pride and satisfaction in what they do as are reported by professional women and those in the arts.

Social contacts with other adults, friendships, the feeling of working with others are also reported as major pleasures of working. One woman reported,

> I've never heard anyone talk about this, but in all the jobs I've held, from my high school job as a grocery store checkout clerk to my professional job now [stockbroker], I've gotten a deep satisfaction from being part of a team of people working together, being part of a work force. I think it's a basic instinct of humans—to work cooperatively and know you can pull your weight with the rest.[2]

Not all mothers need to have paid employment to feel fulfilled. The life of homemaker and mother, so praised and exalted in the first half of the twentieth century, has not suddenly become dull and boring. Many intelligent, effective women find pleasure in the traditional roles of wife and mother, at least while the children are at home, and they enjoy being able to pursue their own interests.

But today women have many more options than they had even thirty years ago. Each individual can decide how to use her unique combination of abilities and skills and circumstances to fashion a life that suits her and enables her to meet her responsibilities to others. Some women prefer to continue working soon after the birth of the child, because their commitment to work is great. Others prefer to drop out of the work force for a few years, returning first to part-time work and later to full-time jobs. Others stay home until the youngest child has left home.

EFFECTS OF MATERNAL ABSENCE

A woman's decision to work and the satisfaction she achieves from a job are related to how much she feels her children need her and how much guilt she experiences if she works outside the home after she has a child. Until recently, both traditional wisdom and psychological and psychiatric opinion have urged mothers to stay at home and rear their children. Women have been told that their children will be irreparably damaged if the mothers are not constantly available, particularly during the early years. And so, many mothers have felt guilt if they had to work or chose to work.

It is possible to recognize that the caregiver-infant bond is a tie of incredible complexity and importance, yet still believe that mothers can work and maintain the important components of that bond. Experts, including Jerome Kagan, T. Berry Brazelton, Stella Chess, and Burton White, believe that a mother can work—White suggests part-time work in the early months—and still be a major figure in the child's life, provided quality substitute care is available. Some experts suggest that all family members benefit when the mother works. Henry Biller and Dennis Meredith write:

> This increase in the percentage of working mothers can have a definite positive impact on the family. It diffuses the intense mother-child relationship, allowing the mother to define herself in terms other than motherhood. Also important, the working mother can give the father an opportunity for a close one-to-one relationship with his children that was not easy to come by before. . . . If mother works . . . and it falls to father to care for children, he gets a chance to be alone with the child for considerable periods in the familiar home setting. One study found that one-fifth of all child-care arrangements made to aid working mothers are fathers, a promising development if fathers realize their father power.[3]

Exposure to a stable adult figure outside the family can increase the child's psychological security. The nuclear family comes to resemble an extended family, and the child has an added source of adult warmth and security.

Each mother must come to terms with feelings of guilt if she is to gain pleasure and satisfaction from work and from her family. If she has a gnawing feeling that she should be at home when she is at work, she will find it hard to function effectively as a parent or as a worker. Her guilt, if marked, can lead to several unsatisfactory outcomes—for example, spoiling children in an effort to compensate for her absence, or failing to give children responsibilities.

How reasonable is the guilt? How does day care affect infants? How do school age children react to maternal absence? What kinds of care should working parents seek out for their children? What adjustments, if any, should working parents make in the family environment and routines? Does research support the view that mothers should not leave children to work outside the home?

Infancy and early childhood

Fear that maternal absence will weaken the child's primary attachment to the mother has been the main reason advanced against women working when children are very young. Jay Belsky and Lawrence Steinberg[4] reviewed studies comparing infants in quality day care centers with children in family care and infants reared at home. They report that infants placed in day care in the first year show little disruption in their ties to their mothers. These infants prefer the mother over the caregiver, are sad at separation, and will seek out the mother for help, just as will children reared at home. Jerome Kagan at Harvard has carried out the most sophisticated studies of attachment behavior of infants and toddlers ranging from three to twenty-nine months. He concludes: "A child can be attached to several people. He may have one favorite . . . . Can I tell you something which surprises me? There's no difference in attachment between the children you saw (at my day care center) and a child of the same age and social class, working or middle, reared at home . . . . All of our infants are attached."[5]

What about social development? Many parents hope children with day care experience will get along better with peers. The evidence is mixed on this topic. Belsky and Steinberg's review indicates that some preschoolers in day care are more pushy and aggressive and less able to interact cooperatively with peers. However, a recent study[6] not included in their review, found that eighteen-month-old children in day care interacted more effectively with children—talking to them, smiling, touching, imitating them. Play with peers seemed to raise the level of play and make the children happier. The opportunity for peer play in day care was thought to account for the toddlers being happier, crying less, and moving about more than home-care children.

Results of tests measuring intellectual functioning indicate that day care has neither beneficial nor negative effects for children from average or advantaged families. Day care has positive effects on children from disadvantaged families and is associated with gains maintained for significant periods. Studies of intellectual development suggest that vocalizations of children reared at home and in family day care are more advanced than those of children in day care. This probably results from the greater interaction between adult and child when there are fewer children present.

Substitute care seems to have few negative effects on very young children, and there is no evidence that the mother-child bond is disrupted. The major drawbacks of substitute care lie in decreased verbal responsiveness found in some children, and in the more aggressive, less cooperative interpersonal style found by some researchers. Working parents, armed with this information, can provide additional verbal stimulation in the evenings and pay extra attention to providing experiences that establish social control.

Elementary school years

In these years, the effects of the mother's absence from the home are determined by how she feels about it, how her husband and children respond, and whether her friends and extended family are supportive. When husband and wife are satisfied with her absence, children generally voice approval and they increase in self-esteem and adjustment. When the mother's employment is a burden to her and she has few other interests outside the home, sons have some problems. The specific effects depend also on the age and sex of the child, the socioeconomic status of the family, support from other adults in the home, willingness of family to help, and the number of changes in life style that must be made.

The mother's employment and absence can affect children in several ways, some positive and others negative.[7] First, the working mother provides a model of effective functioning outside the home. Daughters of working mothers are likely to develop less traditional sex-role concepts. Second, changes in the mother's emotional state affect children. Emotional stress from too many demands or from feelings of guilt can have adverse effects. The guilt may lead the mother to overcompensate—to give the children too many presents or ask too little of them around the house. However, the mother's increase in self-esteem, the pleasure she receives from her work, and her improved morale may result in the children's having higher self-esteem (and scoring better on tests of adjustment) than children whose mothers do not work.

Third, parenting techniques change as the mother goes out to work. Some is less time for housework, many mothers rely on family members to help. Children do more chores; they have greater independence in caring for their own needs, learn to fix their own breakfasts and lunches, do their own laundry, and help in the preparation of dinner. Children become valuable, productive workers, and their self-esteem increases.

At the present time there is no evidence that children of school age suffer maternal deprivation when the mother is employed. Many children are enrolled in after-school activities, and so the amount of time they would enjoy with the mother if she were home is reduced. The daughters of working mothers have increased self-confidence and an enhanced view of women's competence. However, both working-class and middle-class boys appear to have difficulties. In the working class, sons are less admiring of the father and see him as less competent if the mother feels burdened or the social context is disapproving. When the mother feels comfortable about what she is doing and the husband supports her activities, boys have fewer difficulties. Middle-class sons of working mothers appear to score less well on intellectual tests. This finding is not consistent, but it appears often enough so that parents should be alert to problems in areas like mathematics and language achievement.

Adolescence

Most studies of children in these years have found mainly positive effects of mother's working. The benefits appear pronounced for girls, who are more active, independent, and competent in both social and intellectual activities than daughters of mothers who are not employed. Boys, too, show social and personal effectiveness when mothers are employed. Lois Hoffman[8] speculates that the working mother provides a model for both sons and daughters. The children see how work can be incorporated into an active family life.

HANDLING GUILT

The woman who understands that maternal absence can have positive benefits is likely to feel less guilty. She can develop realistic expectations of herself and her family. Few women can do an outstanding job at work, rear remarkable children with ease, maintain a happy marriage, manage a neat and organized household, provide superb meals, entertain effortlessly, and develop their own talents.

A working mother needs to establish priorities, so that she accomplishes what she considers most important and is comfortable neglecting the unessentials. Each mother must figure out how much time she needs to spend each day on essential activities—including eating and sleeping. And then she must decide how to allocate the remaining hours of each day. When children are very young, she may decide to work part time, so that more hours are available for the family. Or she may choose full-time employment that can be done at home. One mother who wanted to work at home set up a small business making fancy desserts. Another did bookkeeping at home. When children start school, the mother who works at a job with a flexible schedule can arrange her work day so that she is at home during most of the hours when the children are not in school.

Many working mothers eliminate some household chores and reduce social commitments. They change the beds less frequently, cook simpler meals, and buy clothes that are easy to care for. Instead of having friends over for dinner, they invite them for dessert and coffee. Many two-career families reduce strain and minimize guilt by socializing with other two-career families, who share their values and have the same problems of limited time.

Gloria Norris and JoAnn Miller,[9] in *The Working Mother's Complete Handbook,* give two rules for handling guilt:

> Rule 1. If you are doing something you know is wrong, stop doing it. If you feel guilty about yelling at your children a lot when you are at home, learn to stop by behavior modification techniques. Count the times you break your own rule about yelling; reward yourself every day you decrease your yelling average of the previous week. The reward need not be large—an extra five minutes of reading a magazine, for example. With time the yelling should decrease. At the same time, substitute an acceptable response for the yelling—that is, waiting five minutes and talking about the issue. If you feel guilty because children are unhappy in child care, look for new arrangements or consider working part time.
>
> Rule 2. Do not quickly blame all family problems on mother's working. If a child is unhappy, listen to what is said to determine what is really going on. Loss of a friend, failure to make a team, a fight with friends may be the source of unhappiness. The average child has problems growing up, and a child will experience difficulties that have nothing to do with mother's working.

Many women are forming or joining support groups, and many working mothers find such groups both helpful and enriching. Members of these groups share experiences and problems and benefit from hearing how other women feel about common concerns. Often support group members are surprised to learn how many other women share their feelings. Just as often they find, as they compare notes with others, that they are worrying unnecessarily—for example, about a felt but unrealistic need to prepare elaborate meals every day. A mother who assumes that all working women feel guilty about not having time to prepare fancy meals for their families might learn, from group discussion, that other women are glad to be relieved of cooking chores. And then she might talk with her family and find that they are happy with the meals she is providing, or that they would like to help with the cooking.

Group discussion can also help women see that problems they attribute to working may have more complicated sources, and that not working is not the answer. For example, a teacher suggested to one mother that her kindergarten child was aggressive, rebellious, and difficult to manage because she worked. When this woman and her husband looked at the problem, they realized they had spoiled their youngest child. The child's behavior problems were the result of inadequate discipline, not of parental absence. The answer was not for the mother to quit work, but for both parents to devise discipline that would help their child to get along with others.

Several kinds of substitute care are available—day care centers, care by a mother who takes care of several children in her home, and care in the child's own home. All methods of care have advantages and disadvantages.

What forms of child care appear desirable and how should parents proceed to get the best care available? Sally Provence, Audrey Naylor, and June Patterson[10] state that during the first year of life, the quality of the caregiver–child relationship is the most important consideration. The child is forming attachments and learning about the permanence of people and objects. Substitute care at home or in a family

BOX 11-1
INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

1. Before you set up an interview, give the individual basic information about the job (live-in/day position, number of hours, driver's license required) to be sure the person has the basic qualifications.
2. Before the interview, obtain the names of references and check them. Be sure to ask why the person left each position. Information obtained from previous employers can provide background for the interview and can help you make your choice.
3. During the interview, describe all the details of the job, both pleasant and unpleasant. Be specific about what you want and about the salary and benefits of the job—vacation, sick pay, holidays, possible time off.
4. Have the children meet the individual and observe the children's reactions. Often children respond immediately in a positive or negative way, and you will want to consider their reactions.
5. To understand the applicant's way of interacting with children, ask specific rather than general questions. Questions such as, "What would you do if Jennifer refused to take her nap or eat her food?" or "What will you do if Amy hits her little brother?" will elicit more revealing answers than "How do you discipline children?"
6. Try to make the applicant comfortable enough so that he or she will feel free to ask questions and reveal personal qualities like humor, adaptability, and curiosity. A general question such as, "What things did you like best and least about your previous job?" may elicit important information that reveals a lot about the person.
7. Do not set impossible standards for the person. You are looking for someone who will care for your children in your absence, not an individual who will take over their complete upbringing. The individual must be someone who will follow your guidelines and be supportive of both your needs and your children's needs.

Adapted from Gloria Norris and JoAnn Miller, *The Working Mother's Complete Handbook* (New York: Dutton, 1979) pp. 42–44.

day care situation can provide warmth, consistency, and the caring attention needed by the young child. You can learn about available family care arrangements by talking to other mothers, and by consulting your pediatrician, local preschools, and the telephone book. If you want someone to care for your children in your home, you can also contact employment agencies. Guidelines for interviewing a caregiver are presented in Box 11-1.

Once a caregiver is hired, a period of overlap when mother and caregiver are both present gives the caregiver an opportunity to observe family routine and the specific qualities of the children. When mothers are specific and clear about values and about preferences for certain routines—demonstrating what they like done and how they like it to be done—caregivers can be more effective substitutes. A trial period is recommended in which parents, caregiver, and children can see how the arrangement will work out. When an outsider comes into the home, parents have to be doubly sure that the house is babyproofed, to guard against accidents. A check list of cautions and precautions to provide for caregivers are presented in Box 11-2.

At-home care provides children with a specific substitute caregiver, familiar surroundings, and uninterrupted care in the case of illness. But this is the most

BOX 11-2
RULES AND INFORMATION FOR THE CAREGIVER

1. Post all important phone numbers (parents' work numbers, doctor's number, general emergency number or police and fire department numbers, poison control center number, numbers of two relatives or close friends who can be reached if parents are not available in an emergency, children's school numbers). This list should be kept next to the telephone.
2. Clearly list the safety rules. Children as well as caregiver must understand restrictions on leaving the home or yard, visiting friends, riding bikes, using appliances.
3. The caregiver must become familiar with the children's and family's routines. She must know where to find clothes, what foods the family prefers, nap times.
4. Caregiver and children must know the children's rules about having friends over, watching television, doing chores.
5. The caregiver must know any specific rules that govern his or her behavior—for example, making or receiving telephone calls, watching television, using appliances.
6. Parents and caregivers should have specific agreements about what happens if parents are late getting home or if caregiver is late to work.

Adapted from: Gloria Norris and JoAnn Miller, *The Working Mother's Complete Handbook* (New York: Dutton, 1979), p. 52.

expensive form of child care. Family day care, care in the home of another family with other children, is cheaper and offers some advantages. Provence, Naylor, and Patterson believe that in the toddler years, the family day care setting provides a more varied environment than a day care center. There are kitchens, laundry areas, bedrooms, and a wealth of activities that cannot be duplicated in a center. In family day care, children can engage in many of the same activities they would if they were at home with their mothers.

Family day care is reasonably priced care in a home-like atmosphere that is neither too large nor too small. For a first child or an only child, family day care can provide the hustle and bustle usually found in large families. Family day care is also more flexible in meeting children's individual needs, because there are fewer children. Some single parents choose family care because it provides a family atmosphere that may be missing after a death or divorce. Norris and Miller make specific recommendations for selecting such a family care setting and advise two visits to each place being considered; one visit with the child and one visit alone for reliable observations. Box 11-3 contains the guidelines for making a choice.

Day care centers provide care for children from infancy, and many provide after school care for children in the elementary grades. In most states such centers

BOX 11-3
FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES

1. Physical Characteristics: Are the physical suroundings safe (fenced outdoor area, protected stairs), clean, spacious enough for the number of children enrolled? Are lunches and snacks nutritious? Is the home licensed? If not, why not? Remember that licensing regulations are intended to protect the children but may not be rigidly enforced.
2. Do toys and equipment provide a variety of activities for children? Are they appropriate for the ages of the children? What happens on rainy or snowy days?
3. Do children have special areas apart from family living quarters? Children need some small area to hang coats, keep belongings. Where do they rest?
4. Does the day care mother plan small excursions to the store, post office, library?
5. Does the day care mother seem to be a competent person? Can she cope, physically and psychologically, with the demands of the children? How does she respond when a child cries or several demands are made of her at the same time?
6. Are any other family members available—husband, children, grandparents. If so, do they enjoy and interact with the children?

Adapted from: Gloria Norris and JoAnn Miller, *The Working Mother's Complete Handbook* (New York: Dutton, 1979), p. 66-68.

BOX 11-4

CHOOSING CHILD CARE CHECK LIST

Name of Center Happy Days Center *Date*

Address 736 State Street *Telephone*

Sponsorship Public—Title XX of S.S. Funds

Overall impression	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	*Comments or examples*
Playgrounds			x	
Space	x			plenty of room, poorly used
Arrangement		x		children running in front of swings
Surfaces			x	dirt and asphalt
Safety		x		broken glass/fence/one swing broken
Equipment		x		meager, unimaginative
Opportunities for:				
Climbing	x			jungle gym
Crawling	x			pipe crawl through
Balancing	x			balance board
Hanging	x			space trolley
Sliding	x			one slide
Riding	x			several tricycles
Swinging	x			one set
Building			x	no blocks/boxes/boards
Digging		x		sandbox
Interior				
Appearance		x		drab, colorless, needs paint
Space		x		
Arrangement		x		
Lighting		x		artificial needed all day
Ventilation		x		
Surfaces		x		all rubber tile, no variety

Overall impression	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	*Comments or examples*
Cleanliness		x		
Safety			x	floor slippery/broken toys
Privacy		x		large cartons/pillows
Activity centers				
Housekeeping			x	grubby!
Blocks	x			beautiful blocks
Reading		x		good assortment/kept out of reach
Art	x			good easels/colors/smocks
Science			x	a few plants/hamster
Music	x			musical teacher uses guitar
Waterplay		x		water table in use
Learning center			x	not enough mat/poor planning
Large muscle play		x		large building blocks
Manipulative		x		
Woodworking				none
Cooking		x		shared utensils w/cook, need own
Dramatic play		x		dressup clothing dumped in box
Health			x	teacher wiped 3 faces w/1 cloth
Isolation room			x	dark/unattractive/lonely
Toilets		x		seats clean/floor & corners dirty
Kitchen	x			cook and kitchen clean and neat
Cleanliness				
Building		x		
Children			x	did not wash hands before snack
Storage				
Children's toys		x		

BOX 11-4 continued

Overall impression	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	*Comments or examples*
Adults' property				piled on top of cubbies/pocket
				books in evidence
Maintenance		x		
Safety				
Emergency procedures		x		posted/question whether rehearsed
Surfaces			x	floor slippery
Electrical			x	ext. cord tacked around basebrd.,
				3 outlets uncovered
Program				
Balance			x	children kept at table too long
Appropriate activity			x	two's had planned table activity
Creative		x		good supply of elegant junk
Structured		x		
Developmental			x	little evidence of knowledge of
Educational		x		watered down first grade
Fun		x		too much aimless wandering/cont.
Choices				with a lot of adult guidance

must meet specific standards intended to assure the health and safety of the children. The parent whose child goes to a day care center is sure of having child care available every day, at some centers from seven in the morning until seven in the evening. Many centers have credentialed personnel who have been trained to work with children, and many centers have play equipment and supplies not to be found in most home care situations. All centers provide opportunities for contact with children of the same age.

However, day care is more expensive than family care, the child receives less individualized attention because each caretaker is responsible for more children, and changes in staff may be frequent. Other mothers are likely to have firsthand knowledge of various day care centers. And some social service departments have

Overall impression	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	*Comments or examples*
Professionalism		x		so-so
People—Director		x		pleasant/not too responsive
Appearance		x		so-so
Personality		x		so-so
Staff				
Appearance		x		so-so
Attitudes		x		hard to judge
Supervision		x		
Attention to administrative data		x		
Cook	x			cheerful/pleasant/talks to ch.
Administration		x		runs a tight ship/good attent. to detail (reports, etc.) Supervision: clear that staff work *for* her—she is the boss!

*SOURCE: Grace Mitchell, *The Day Care Book* Copyright © 1979 by Grace Mitchell. Reprinted with permission of Stein and Day Publishers.

lists of licensed centers. Plan at least two visits to each center you are considering, and observe the responsiveness and competence of the caregivers. Grace Mitchell[11] suggests that you ask the questions in Box 11-4. Perhaps most important, pay attention to your gut reactions—to the director, to the staff, to the physical environment, and to the children being cared for.

Elementary school children are in school for about six hours each day and require day care only after school and during vacations. Some school systems provide after-school activities. When these are not available, babysitters and family day care continue to be reasonable alternatives.

When children reach adolescence, they should be able to take care of themselves, and they are likely to resent an outsider's presence. Some parents, worried about sexual activity (first sexual intercourse most often occurs in the teen's home when parents are away), are reluctant to leave teen-agers alone at home. When teens in the family do not get along and fight when alone, there is additional cause for concern. Fitzhugh Dodson[12] recommends that parents tell children that if fighting does not stop, a college student will be hired to stay with them after school.

A particularly difficult problem occurs when the child becomes sick. Caretakers at day care centers and in family day care settings may insist that the child be well to attend, so that the other children are not at risk. Most mothers have a list of alternative arrangements, with back-up care provided by a relative or a paid sitter. If necessary, you may be able to arrange for a friend to take care of the child, and then reciprocate by caring for her children on a weekend. Older children who are not seriously ill can be left alone, if necessary. You can call home every few hours and also arrange for a neighbor to check on the child's condition a few times during the day and be available for an emergency. Many mothers feel very guilty at leaving a sick child with a minor ailment, but one mother reported: "I handle it exactly the way my mother did. I remember it was extremely disappointing, but I also remember surviving it. The general message is 'You're sick, but I'm not and I'm going to work, and you stay home and I will call you twice during the day, and you can have ice cream for your throat. And you'll be much happier and much less bored when you're back in school.' "[13] This mother finds that her children have very few illnesses and that they recover very quickly, just as she did.

THE FATHER'S ROLE

The family is for many men the primary source of satisfaction. Increased involvement in family responsibilities can enhance this satisfaction. Few fathers are prepared to take on total responsibility for children even for a few days. But they are learning, and they are beginning to pay attention to children's needs in new ways. Here is one father's description of his experiences in caring for his infant son:

> This is really the first time in my life I've confronted someone who constantly needed. I was used to being the one who needed, the one who, all while growing up, had things done for him. But Michael's demands are real demands—they're direct and unavoidable. His presence—just having to do for him—has really drawn me out. There's a depth of love you can feel toward a baby which is different from any feelings I've ever felt toward an adult, there's a depth of feeling you just didn't know was there. Now it's hard to imagine not knowing Michael. Most men that don't spend time with their kids compete with them for their wife's attention. I never have that feeling toward Michael.[14]

Some fathers rearrange their work schedules so they can spend more time with children. They may choose to go in to work early in the morning so they can leave by three in the afternoon, and some cut down to part-time work. Such arrangements are used most by professionals, who control their work hours. But factories and other businesses are beginning to permit flexible schedules that vary starting and quitting times.

Many fathers who share the care of their children find that they are closer, not only to the children, but also to their wives and parents and more aware of their own feelings.

> Once I started to spend time, I started to really love him and care about him a lot. Before, it was more of an intellectual relationship: I'm the father, that's my son. I got a lot more tender feelings. Being with him has opened up a side of me that I have trouble expressing otherwise. I had that whole macho thing about how men are supposed to be tough. I started talking to my own father about how hard he was to communicate with and how I'd like to change that, how we never really had any personal communication at all. In the process of doing that, he told me a lot about his own childhood. I hadn't really had any person-to-person communication with my father since I was in junior high school.[15]

Some fathers are spending more time with their children by including them in their work worlds. Taking children to work to see what they do and what the job involves, brings parent and child closer together, and gives them insights into each other.

MAINTAINING TIES TO CHILDREN

When both parents are at work all day and the children are home, with a caretaker when young or unattended when older, the parents and the children want to keep in touch during those hours of separation. When the child is old enough to use the phone, a regular call at a time convenient for both—during the parent's mid-morning or mid-afternoon break, just after the child's nap, or when the child gets home from school—provides contact and gives them a chance to share dailiness, to talk about an incident on the playground or what is planned for supper. Some parents leave messages where the child will find them. Others send post cards, to the delight of the child who doesn't receive much mail.

Dodson suggests using a tape cassette. The imaginative parent can use time during lunch hour or after the children are in bed to tape a "letter" or a story, perhaps chapters from a child's favorite book. These are for the child to listen to during the parent's absence. Older children can use the tape recorder to tell parents about important events at school, make suggestions for meals or family activities, and leave messages if they are going to be away when the parents get home. Tapes should be used to enhance communication, not as a substitute for communication between parent and child. Tapes should not be prepared during time that parent and child could be spending together.

Working parents find it helpful to meet with children's teachers at the beginning of each school year. During these conferences parents can describe their work schedules, and they can talk about how each parent would like to be involved in school projects. A highly involved father may be hurt when teachers and principal assume he is uninterested and call to seek only mother's participation in events or projects. Usually, communicating the interest and willingness of both parents to help is sufficient to prompt the teacher to include both. Meetings between parents

and teachers also give parents opportunities to demonstrate their interest in the child's work and behavior in school. The teacher who knows that parents are interested is most likely to keep them informed about the child's problems and progress.

Parents can strengthen ties with children by including them in their work lives whenever possible, just as parents participate in school events and observe classes whenever they can. The child who visits the parent's office, shop, or factory, and even helps there on a vacation day, learns a little about what the parent does all day and something about a particular vocation. When parents discuss their jobs with each other, consulting with each other and sharing the problems as well as the successes, children begin to get some sense of what is involved in working with other people, of what it means to have a job with responsibilities and opportunities and frustrations and satisfactions.

Similarly, the parent who attends events that are important to the child learns about the child's life—the environment and the people who are contributing to the child's development and perception of the world. The working parent may find it difficult to take the time to go even to PTA meetings that are held after working hours. Events during the day—school plays, games, class days when parents can observe teachers and children—are at least as important. But rare is the working parent who has not had to miss these opportunities. When your child comes home with an announcement of an event you cannot possibly attend, how can you respond? Be clear in expressing your disappointment, and explain why you cannot be present. The child will be at least somewhat comforted by the knowledge that you would like to attend. And you can set aside some special time to spend only with that child, as another, different way to be together.

This is the kind of conflict that makes working outside the home so difficult for many women. Each parent must decide how often and when children take precedence over work and when work comes first. The woman who has a supportive husband finds ways to share responsibilities. An effective parent takes care of herself as well as of her family. She learns when to say no as well as when to say yes. How do you balance the desire to share your child's world with the demands of your job and your need for time for yourself? There are no easy answers, but certainly it helps to be clear about what you want and flexible in how you respond to each day.

Separation anxieties

Separation anxiety is not a phenomenon experienced solely by children. Working parents—both mothers and fathers—often feel guilt about leaving children with a caretaker, and their separation anxiety is as traumatic for them as it is for young children. The conscientious parent is distressed by the crying of the toddler as the parent begins to dress to leave, by the pouting of the older child whose play is interrupted when it is time to go to the babysitter.

When a parent believes that it is reasonable for her to work and that doing so does not deprive the child of anything essential, she can handle such behavior calmly. The child's feelings are recognized and accepted—he or she is entitled to feel disappointed that the parent will not be available for several hours. But the parent's behavior is not changed to suit the child's wishes. Children learn to find satisfaction in other activities as they come to understand and accept the parent's absence.

Many parents set aside a time for the child each evening. During these hours, parent and child can read stories, take a walk together, work on homework or hobbies. The parent's undivided attention is focused on the child and the activity for a given period. No interruptions are permitted—phone calls and chores must wait. Often the child's knowledge that he or she will have that half hour in the evening eases the morning departure.

Norris and Miller use the term "Reentry Frenzies" to describe the bedlam that breaks loose when mother opens the front door at the end of the working day, or picks the children up at the sitter's or a center. The children may have been playing happily, absorbed in an activity. When mother appears, they leap at her with pieces of news or demands, a detailed description of an event or a game, expressing feelings and thoughts they have saved all day. One couple complained that their four-year-old son refused to let anybody else talk in the car on the way home from the day care center. When the parents realized that this was the child's way of saying that he had missed his parents, they were able to be more patient and accepting of this nonstop chatter.

BOX 11-5

MINIMIZING SEPARATION ANXIETY AT DAY CARE CENTERS

1. Ease entry into day care center by remaining with the child for a significant amount of time each day for the first few weeks and by having extra time to stay a few minutes when the child first comes.
2. Give the director and staff information about the child's home life—brothers and sisters, pets, daily routines—so caregivers can talk about home during the day.
3. Give the child something from home—a favorite toy, a pillow, or blanket—to keep at the school to remind the child of home during the day.
4. Give the child pictures of family members to keep at school; a child sometimes finds it reassuring to go to her locker and look at the pictures.
5. Telephone children over two years to maintain contact during the day.
6. Exchange information with caregivers at the end of the day, so that you can talk about what has happened in school and be aware of any special experiences the child may have had.
7. Caregivers can ease separations by helping children wave hello or goodbye and by encouraging the child to talk about home.
8. Caregivers can help children build skills and competencies, increasing a sense of self-esteem and mastery that can help children deal with separation. When children feel more in control and less helpless, they are better able to cope with stress.
9. Caregivers can help children cope with feelings of separation by encouraging games of coming and going, hiding and rediscovering, losing and finding. Even though these games have nothing to do with the parents, the theme of separation and reunion helps handle feelings.

Adapted from: S. Provence, A. Naylor, and J. Patterson, *The Challenge of Day Care* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 65–67.

This may be the most difficult hour of the day for both parents and children. No matter how satisfying a job is, no matter how well a particular day goes, by five o'clock we are all likely to be at least a little tired. Children are tired too, but full of the day's happenings and eager to share these with the most important people in their lives, their parents. This is a time when feelings are close to the surface. Young children, especially, are hungry and easily frustrated, and tantrums are not unusual at this hour.

Remember that the child has been waiting for you. Be patient, and willing to wait for her. Don't use a reward to end a tantrum, use it to reinforce a cheerful greeting. If your arrival has interrupted a game and the child is upset at having to rush off, you might reflect the child's feelings and add an I-message that you have to get home to prepare dinner. Some parents spend the first half hour at home listening to children's conversations, settling arguments, and talking over the day. This is a good strategy with young children, who may not be able to wait for an hour until after dinner. A second strategy is for parents to devote the first half hour to relaxing from the day. This time can be spent resting, taking a shower, reading the mail. Then the parent seeks out the children and listens to their news while preparing dinner.

Quality time

The parent who works spends less time with children than the parent who is home and available to the children all day. And the working parent must, during nonworking hours, manage to do chores and errands and eat and sleep and play. Time is precious. And the quality of the time shared by parent and child is important.

Dorothy Briggs' definition of a genuine encounter provides a good definition of quality time—"focused attention [on the child] . . . . attention with a special intensity born of direct, personal involvement . . . . being intimately open to the particular, unique qualities of your child."[16] It is being "all there" with the child. The quality of the relationship, not the nature of the specific activity, is the crucial factor.

Genuine encounters differ according to the age of the child. In infancy, quality time may be active play with the baby, expanding his or her world by introducing new objects or toys or by taking time with routine care, smiling and talking. In the toddler years, quality time may be watching as your child explores an area, waiting for him to bring you the latest discovery. It is resisting the urge to help the child as she tries to climb the stairs or sweep the kitchen floor. In the preschool years, quality time may be arranging a special experience—a trip to a dairy farm or fruit orchard or a special occasion at home with his friends. It may be getting a puppy or kitten and taking the time to show the preschooler how to play with and care for the animal. In the elementary school years, it is helping the child create a work area and a routine for school work. It is going on excursions with a group, like the Cub Scouts or Brownies, or listening as the child practices a musical instrument. In the adolescent years, it is listening to long discussions on the merits of different kinds of jeans or the advantages of a particular kind of sports equipment.

Some activities, if enjoyed by both the child and the parent, are special at almost all ages. Reading is one of these. It includes physical affection in cuddling and sitting close, sharing the ideas and emotions evoked by the stories, and the intellectual stimulation that comes from seeing the words and gaining new information. Some stories appeal to all ages, and these can start the reading sessions. Later each child may want a particular book. Walking is another activity that can be special. The parent and child are alone with each other. They can exchange and share feelings and ideas, talk over problems and experiences, and enjoy the exercise and the outdoors.

We easily understand that quality time can incorporate play, but we less often think of shared experiences doing household work as quality time. Yet in the course of working together, parents and children learn about each other's special strengths and weaknesses as they can in no other situation. The teen-ager who keeps her room a mess may reveal unexpected competence as she devises shortcuts while working in the yard with her mother. Working together also provides time for conversations that might never occur otherwise. With the activity as a common focus, children may talk about their friends and their opinions in ways they would not if they sat down with parents to "have a talk." One full-time mother several years ago described how her relationships with both her teen-age daughters improved when she started doing dishes with each of them separately. In the course of that routine activity, the girls discussed their friends, their hopes and worries without her asking a single question.

Quality time is work and play with children, but it is also attention focused on the needs of the child even when that child is not present. Quality time is time spent planning some special event for him, thinking about the wisdom of getting her into a sport, encouraging him to take on a volunteer activity, searching the stores on a lunch hour for special jeans or shorts. Although no direct interaction with the child occurs, this time is devoted to actions that convey to the child that he or she is special and worthy of attention. The parent who spends a Saturday afternoon helping to paint playground equipment, or a Tuesday evening baking cookies for a school bake sale demonstrates that the child's activities are important and worthy of support. It may be precisely this kind of quality time that is most likely to be lost when mothers return to work. The working parent who is aware of the importance of thought and time devoted to the child's needs will make time available for this.

How is quality time related to the quantity of time? Quality time is time spent with children when parents have the energy and interest to focus on the children. Other concerns and worries must be put aside, and this is difficult when there is so much that must be done. Spending large amounts of time in the general vicinity of the child does not guarantee quality time. The parent who can arrange to do this will have a different kind of communication with the child. The working parent who is able to set aside a few hours for herself will have a chance to mull over the child's needs in a more relaxed way, and will be rested and calmer when she is with the child. It is harder for a mother to give quality time when she works, but not impossible. Many women believe that their work makes them more alert and interested companions for children, able to give a kind of attention that they could not before.

SETTING APPROPRIATE LIMITS

As in all families, reasonable limits are required. When both parents work outside the home, it is especially important that they set and enforce appropriate limits. The line between being too lenient and being too demanding is very fine. Parents may be inclined to indulge children to compensate for being gone all day. Some mothers ask little from their children in the way of household help because the housekeeper does the work during the day or the babysitter picks up, or because they are reluctant to ask children to do chores they consider "mother's work." The working parent needs to remember that chores are not an imposition but a shared responsibility in the home. Children who have regular chores learn valuable habits and a sense of responsibility and participation in the family.

Parents who permit immature and emotional behavior are also being indulgent. Working parents sometimes feel children are justified in being angry at their absence. When a four-year-old has a temper tantrum because both parents are leaving the house and he cannot go, the parents are sometimes apologetic and comforting, giving the child the impression that a tantrum is a realistic response. Susan, the mother of a three-year-old, found that when she was clear in her own mind that her working was acceptable, she was able to explain to Billy she was leaving three mornings a week for work. After exploring his feelings that he wanted her to be home, she said she understood his wish to have her home, but she was going to work. If Billy wanted to continue the tantrums, she was going to ignore them. Billy looked at her for a few minutes and went off to play with the housekeeper. The tantrums did not stop instantly, but they gradually disappeared.

Parents may find that when both work outside the home, they demand too much from children. They may ask them to do chores that are too difficult. They may ask them to care for younger children when they are just able to care for themselves. They may ask energetic children to be quiet while a parent sleeps in the daytime so he or she can work at night. As parents set limits and establish structure, they must check their expectations of children: Is the child able to do the task? If she is able to, is the amount of work or responsibility so great that the child is robbed of childhood pleasures? There is no easy way to decide just how much to ask of a child. Don't allow yourself to become so overwhelmed by the demands on you that you, in turn, make demands on your children for which they are not ready. Often children can do far more than we expect. However, if children begin to develop behavior problems, as described in Chapter Fourteen, then parents can decide to change the responsibilities.

THE COOPERATING FAMILY

Although power is shared and the division of labor in the family changes somewhat when women work, women still retain primary responsibility for household management. Survey data[17] indicate that few husbands share the cooking, cleaning, and other household chores equally. Eighty to 85 percent of working wives do most of these tasks themselves, in addition to holding jobs. Husbands, however, are more active in caring for children—in the same survey 35 percent report they share child care chores equally.

The working woman must establish priorities. She needs to accept that there are still only twenty-four hours in each day and she now has many fewer hours available. And so she must organize the household routine and the chores—shopping for groceries just once a week, cooking many meals at a time and freezing some of them, buying permanent press clothes. Several books offer suggestions about how to streamline household activities. Among these are *Checklist for a Working Wife* by Marilyn Cooley[18] and *Getting Organized* by Stephanie Winston.[19]

Values may change. The working mother who would like both a freshly scrubbed kitchen floor and an afternoon at the beach with the children may have to make a choice, and may find that she is adjusting her values in the process. As this happens her priorities may shift, and she learns the importance of being flexible.

At least as important as priorities, flexibility, and organization is the cooperation of family members. When children are infants, husband and wife share responsibilities. As children grow into the toddler years, they can begin to help. Very young children take pride and pleasure in doing things for and like adults. Parents should capitalize on this natural desire to help and should encourage young children to do chores. The child's room can be arranged so there are shelves and boxes for toys, clothes pegs and rods low enough for the child to reach, a place for shoes, and a stool so the child can get to dresser drawers. At eighteen months a child can, with help, put away toys and clothes.

As children get older, they can be given household chores, for example, emptying wastebaskets and putting away plastic dishes. Children of four and five can dust and polish furniture, clean counters, and scrub pots and pans. Children of eight to ten can learn to prepare simple meals, put away groceries, and do the laundry.

Household chores can be organized at weekly family meetings. In the beginning, a list is made of all household jobs. Each family member picks the chores he or she is willing to do for a one- or two-week period. The chores that no one wants can be rotated. Family members may want to work in pairs, particularly when children are young or when chores are time consuming. When all chores have been distributed, a chart can be made, with the list of chores, the name of the family member responsible for each chore, and spaces for check marks to be made as the chores are completed. Family members will have the satifaction of helping. And parents will be able to tell, from a glance at the chart whether chores are being done on time.

Several steps need to be taken to insure the success of this method. First, the parents must show the children how to do chores they are not already familiar with. It is surprising how often parents assume a child knows how to do what is asked. Working with the child the first few times improves the child's performance. Second, and very important, parents must not apply their standards to the child's work. In the beginning work is bound to be less perfect and to take longer. Appreciation of the effort and praise for what is done correctly will improve performance. Third, the children may not always complete their chores on schedule. Parents should be patient and understanding, and they should not take over the job. If children select their own chores, they are more likely to get to them. Even if children choose difficult chores, let them try. They may learn about their own limits—and they may surprise you with their skills.

Family meetings should be held weekly, more often if necessary in the beginning, to talk about how this arrangement is working. A family may need several meetings to design a workable schedule that all members can meet. Don't expect this system to be an instant success. Do be generous with encouragement, apprecia-

BOX 11-6

SUGGESTIONS FOR ENCOURAGING COOPERATION IN HOUSEHOLD TASKS

1. Give kids a part in planning. Let them decide on the distribution of chores and the penalties for not following through.
2. Be specific. Make sure everyone knows exactly what is expected of him or her—and when. A written chart seems to work best, at least at the start.
3. Be generous with praise. Nothing encourages effort more than sincere appreciation.
4. Be flexible. . . . Many unexpected things may come up that make keeping an exact schedule difficult. If you are understanding, you are more likely to gain like treatment when your schedule requires extra help.
5. Answer all questions clearly and cheerfully, no matter how obvious the answers may seem to you. Don't ever say anything disparaging or ask, "Can't you figure that out for yourself?"
6. Be generous with praise. Being appreciated makes efforts seem worthwhile.
7. Don't take over. It really punctures a child's morale to see that you don't think he can manage a task himself, and he is much less likely to try again.
8. Keep the lines of communication open. Meet together at specified times to discuss how things are going, what needs change or improvement.
9. Keep your values straight. Remember that cooperation is the goal, not perfection. An occasional lapse in an overall pattern of responsible behavior is best forgiven and forgotten. We all sometimes put off our chores.
10. Relax. If you have been a meticulous housekeeper and a neatnik, the odds are against your children measuring up to your standards. That doesn't mean you must tolerate sloppiness, but it does mean that everyone will be happier and you will gain a lot more time for youself if you don't throw a fit every time things are not done to your exact specifications.
11. Be generous with praise. After all, if no one notices your efforts, why bother?

SOURCE: E. Berman, *The Cooperating Family* (Englewood Cliff, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977) pp. 53–54

tion, and praise. One family rewards itself as a group by going out to dinner when everyone completes chores on time. This encourages children to help each other, so everyone can have fun.

The family needs to discuss how to handle neglected chores, and everyone should agree on the method. Some families impose restrictions—no dinner out with the rest of the family, loss of a week's allowance, loss of a privilege. One mother demonstrated what would happen if she didn't do her work—for one week she didn't shop, cook, or do laundry. After just a few days the children had learned the importance of everyone doing their share.

The mother who does not feel guilty about working and does not try to be a super-mom can enjoy being part of a cooperating family. Shared work can be quality time for parent and child. And the self-esteem of all family members is increased.

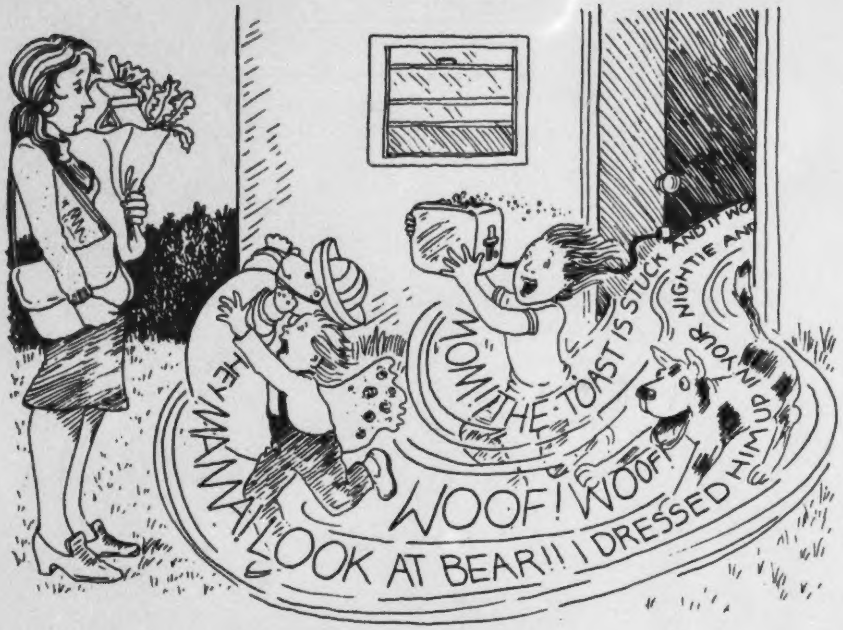
THE MARRIAGE

As women move out of the home and develop independent work lives, they seek power and respect in their relationships with men. They realize they need to become more assertive, that they need to establish vocational and perhaps also educational goals if they are to progress at work. Many women fear that they will become less feminine and appealing. They worry that if they are successful, their husbands may feel less successful. The woman who is just beginning to work may be coping with changes in herself and in her relationship to her husband while she is adjusting to her job and to new routines at home.

Change brings anxiety and tension. The woman going through this period of adjustment is wise to recognize that some problems and tensions are inevitable and that many are temporary. If her family is supportive, she will weather this difficult time, and the whole family is likely to benefit.

In the excitement and busyness of working, parents forget that the family started with the primacy of the couple relationship. Just as a working mother must plan carefully for quality time with children, she must also work to maintain and strengthen her relationship with her husband. Husband and wife need time together, regularly and as frequently as possible, to talk about things other than household or child care matters. Some couples reserve one evening a week for dinner out, even if it's just hamburgers and a cup of coffee. Others get away for a weekend. Majorie Shaevitz and Morton Shaevitz,[20] who counsel two-career couples, suggest the following methods of strenthening the tie:

1. Include your partner in professional relationships when possible.
2. Devote time to individual interests that express your uniqueness, so you have information and enthusiasm to share.
3. Accept your partner as he or she really is and enjoy the positive traits; realize that the positive traits will also have negative features—the conscientious, responsible parent may want children to be superresponsible and may nag to improve behavior.
4. Applaud and appreciate your partner's accomplishments.
5. Please the partner by buying an occasional extravagance or doing a special favor.
6. Develop closeness by touching and sexual expression; because there is less time for sexual encounters, you need to plan to insure that both partners have time and are in the mood.
7. Take time to plan the future together.


HEY MAMA! LOOK AT BEAR!! I DRESSED HIM UP IN YOUR NIGHTIE AN
MOM! THE TOAST IS STUCK AND IT WO
WOOF! WOOF!

Working parents who take care of themselves can take better care of their children and of each other. To reduce tension and fatigue associated with the dual roles of worker and parent, you should each set aside some time in the day for rest and relaxation. Such activities may initially seem self-indulgent, but they will increase your ability to manage both roles.

The working mother who takes care of her own needs—exercises regularly, eats a balanced diet, and makes sure she has private time for thinking and pursuing her own interests—is less likely to be tense and tired and more likely to enjoy her job and her family. Norris and Miller[21] suggest the following ways for mothers to be good to themselves:

1. Keep up your own friendships—exercising with a friend several times a week is ideal.
2. Develop ways of easing the transition from office to home—walk the last block or two, take a quick shower before dinner, rest for ten minutes after arriving home.
3. Learn your own personal signs of stress and do not ignore them; get rest and spend time relaxing.
4. Discover the most stressful times of the day and find ways of relieving tension. You may need a different morning or evening routine. Get up an hour earlier to reduce stress—the loss of sleep is worth feeling more relaxed.
5. Develop a quick tension reliever, like Yoga exercises, deep breathing, or meditation.

The life of the working parent is challenging and demanding. As mothers, especially, learn to value what they accomplish, they relax and are more efficient and happier. Most working parents find the challenges worth the efforts required, as life becomes richer and more exciting for the whole family.

SUMMARY

This chapter describes women's reasons for entering the work force and possible effects on children of mother's employment. The emotional bond between parent and child remains strong when both parents have employment outside the home. But parents must try to insure that very young children receive language stimulation and that older children, particularly boys, receive encouragement for intellectual activity. The advantages of child care for children of different ages are reviewed, and suggestions are given for ways of evaluating potential child care arrangements.

Ways of maintaining and strengthening emotional ties to children are presented, as are ways of setting the appropriate limits. A major force in helping families to accomplish all their tasks is the cooperation that occurs when everyone works together. Time and attention to family needs are important. In addition, both parents must be sure that they devote time to the marital relationship and to themselves. When adults lead complex, busy lives, they need time to relax and recharge their batteries so they have enthusiasm, interest, and energy to enjoy family activities, and life in general. Children can benefit from exposure to the parents' work worlds. Further, they can grow and blossom when parents ask that they share household tasks. Responsibility, self-esteem, and competence are the results of such blossoming.

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12

Single parenting

Single parenting. The term seems simple enough to understand—parenting by one adult, usually one biological parent. But the term actually refers to a variety of living arrangements that can include several adults in the household. Some children live with a single mother or father who cares for them with or without help from the other parent. Some live with a mother or father who also has live-in adult companions; some children live with a single parent in the grandparent's home, so that two or three adults are present in the household. Others are reared by an adoptive or biological parent who has never married. Many live most of the time with one parent (single, in a relationship, or remarried) and visit the other parent for days or weeks, regularly or irregularly. Just as there are multiple living arrangements for single parent families, there are multiple causes for them: (1) death, (2) desertion, separation or divorce, (3) having a child without being married, and (4) adopting a child without being married.

Women are most often the heads of single parent families. Statistics from 1975 U. S. Bureau of the Census report[1] reveal that 15 percent of all children under eighteen live in families headed by single women and about 3 percent live in families headed by single men. Of four-and-a-half million families with a single female head, the woman has always been single in 12 percent, separated in 27 percent, divorced in 38 percent, widowed in 18 percent, and alone for other reasons (for example, institutionalization of the husband) in 5 percent. Separation, divorce, and widowerhood are the main reasons that fathers are single parents. As the divorce rate increases, statisticians predict that 30 to 40 percent of all children will spend at least some time during their formative years in a single parent family.

This chapter concerns the special problems single parents confront in raising children, and the ways childrearing techniques can be modified to handle these problems. The information and suggestions in these pages can also, at times, be useful for married parents—when one or the other must be absent from the family because of illness or business, for example.

SINGLE MOTHER/SINGLE FATHER

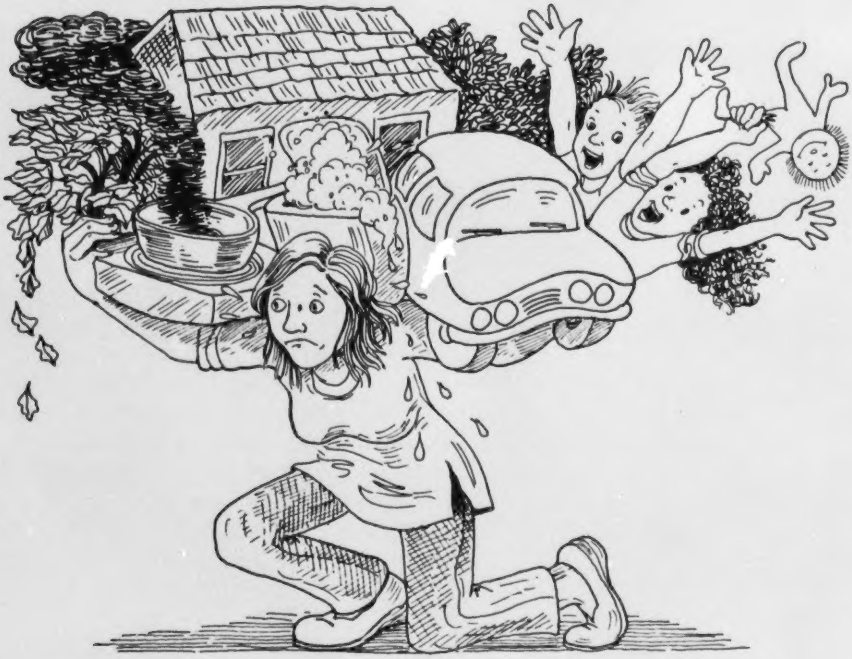
Women and men face similar problems as single parents. Each must fulfill some of the functions of the absent parent as she or he raises children and manages a family. Nevertheless, there are striking differences between the experiences of single mothers and single fathers.

Single mothers, who are usually separated or divorced, face greater economic problems than single fathers. And women have had little psychological, educational, or occupational preparation. When men separate and are divorced, they are required to pay a percentage of their income for the support of wives and children. Many men pay less than the court has ordered, and many pay nothing. Even the man who wants to contribute an adequate amount toward the support of his children finds that one income does not support two households as well as it did one. And so most single mothers go to work, many to full-time work.

Women—especially those who have been full-time mothers and homemakers—have little or no job experience. They have been socialized to be nonassertive. They have probably never thought of pursuing a career, and they probably have no specialized or salable training or skills. So most single mothers work at jobs that do not pay well, provide few benefits and little security—jobs that offer little chance for advancement and even less challenge or satisfaction. Financial resources of single mothers, then, are more limited than those of single fathers. Even when women are well educated, they may be poorly prepared to earn a living. Census figures indicate that 18 percent of college-educated female family heads are living at poverty levels, as compared to only 3 percent of college-educated male family heads.[2]

Many women also lack the independence and assertiveness needed to compete as equals with men. Men have been trained since childhood to select goals and to work toward them aggressively, disregarding what others might say. Even women who have had some preparation are, after years of marriage, accustomed to sharing responsibilities and decisions with their husbands, if not actually deferring to them. Most women are not prepared to assume complete responsibility for supporting the family, running the household, and rearing children. And, indeed, few men are prepared to handle all facets of family life—most are accustomed to the more limited roles of breadwinner and part-time father.

There are more single women than men in most age categories, and men can more easily take the initiative in social and sexual relationships. And so a single mother has fewer opportunities than a single father for a satisfying social life. Many women find their married friends no longer invite them to parties. And many single mothers do not feel comfortable venturing out alone in the evenings. A



recent study[3] revealed that, while divorced parents found their social lives more restricted following divorce, divorced mothers reported significantly less contact with adults than did married parents, and they often felt confined to a child's world. Divorced fathers reported that, after the initial shock of the separation, they pursued active social lives with frequent sexual contacts, although this activity decreased with time. Women were less satisfied with casual contacts, desiring intimate ties. Two years following the divorce, both divorced parents felt less satisfied with their social lives than married persons, although divorced mothers' satisfaction had improved somewhat.

In addition to feeling isolated from society, single mothers also feel unappreciated by those who live around them. They feel bitter at the increased number of burdens they bear with minimal social support. Many personal accounts attest to the loneliness, the emotional turmoil, and the worry such women feel.

Some single mothers—about 12 percent of the total number—are women who have chosen to adopt or to deliver children without having a father available to help. Many of these women—and many divorced and widowed single mothers as well—enjoy the challenge of single parenthood and believe they are doing a good job. One woman writes:

> There exist no norms for single parenthood. There exist few models. For any individual, functioning without norms can be frightening. Yet, it is precisely the lack of applicable norms and models that may be one of the

> strengths of the father-absent home. The validity of the expectations attached to the nuclear family is being challenged. All the rules and regulations of teachers, psychologists, case-workers, social workers, etc. apply to other people, nuclear family people—and not to the single mother. The 'spoz'd to be's' just aren't applicable to single-mother and father-absent children's lives. We don't have to *prove* our concern to anyone!
>
> Hence, single mothers have much more freedom to deal with their problems, if they are willing to take the chance and experiment. Alternative life styles demand alternative solutions and problem-solving methods.[4]

Many men feel a role strain similar to that experienced by women. They have worked and supported the family and perhaps been responsible for most family decisions. But most have had limited contacts with their children and little experience as full-time caretakers. A widower describes all his new responsibilities after his wife's death:

> Someone had to get a meal. That someone was me, a kitchen novice who, literally, had difficulty operating an electric can opener on his first several assaults. Someone also had to see about laundry, do the shopping, balance the checkbook, make three sets of school lunches, drive two younger children to school, pay the insurance, the real estate and income taxes, the mortgage, take the cat to the vet's, have the lawn mower fixed, argue with the roofer, attend the PTA meetings, sign the report cards, see about winter coats and boots, dental and doctor checkups, urge letters to grandmothers, and bedevil three children who weren't so confused or grief-stricken that they didn't know their own minds when it came to making beds, hanging up pajamas and clothes, and eating green vegetables. Given the opportunity, they would vote negative every time.
>
> I clearly recall the satisfaction and shameless, inordinate pride that came with the accomplishment of small household tasks. Once I had managed to get the supper served and eaten, the dishes done, the garbage carried out, the homework secured, and the lunches made, I felt in a rank with Caesar Augustus.[5]

Like women, men have had little preparation for parenting a family alone. The average father has had almost no contact with young children before having his own. Interviews with single fathers reveal that one of their greatest problems is lack of information about children's growth and development. They do not know what behavior to expect, and they feel they may be too demanding. They have little time and worry that they are too impatient. Men have to learn new interpersonal skills, develop sensitive awareness of what children are thinking and feeling, and learn to run a household while holding a job. But, they have many more supports than women as they go about learning.

Men have the great advantage of being able to continue in their usual roles at work. Even though this is difficult at a time of family crisis, it is easier than trying to enter the job market or adapting to full-time work after not working or having only a part-time job. It is true that the newly single father may have added expenses, for child support or for a housekeeper. But men earn more than women.

A single father also has an easier time socially. While a single woman is not considered an asset at a party, a single man is certainly welcome. And it is still more acceptable for a man to take the initiative in establishing relationships with the opposite sex. The man who is raising his children alone is admired, while a single mother may be less readily accepted. Men must learn new interpersonal skills as single parents, but they can do so gradually. The single mother must very quickly make the adjustments necessary to find a job that will support herself and her children, all the while continuing to function also as parent and homemaker.

We have focused on the difficulties of widows, widowers, divorced women, but we have said little about special problems of the divorced father who does not have custody. One such father wrote:

> The feeling of being lonely is a terrible ordeal for the divorced father. As trying as those past times might have been, with screaming infants, demanding toddlers, unreasonable fifth graders, and self-centered teen-agers, there were still those rich moments of listening to them, arguing with them, laughing with them, playing with them, teasing them, scaring them, hating them, loving them. Now it is all done from a distance, from a position of objectiveness. You are no longer on their premises. The chatter, the sighs, the cries, the squeals now come from afar, no more on a continuous daily basis. Instead, they are interspersed by minutes and hours and days and weeks of silence . . . a deafening silence, it may seem.[6]

Such fathers experience feelings of failure, inferiority, and rejection. If the husband sought the divorce, as many do, he feels guilty about leaving the children. Frustration rises as he becomes aware of the cost of maintaining two households and providing for his children's visits—all on one income that barely supported a single household before the divorce. Nevertheless, out of these difficult experiences some fathers are able to develop deep relationships with their children.

GRIEF AND STRESS

Only 10 to 12 percent of all single mothers and a much smaller percentage of single fathers have never married. Thus, most single parents must, during the first months in this role, cope with the pain, sadness, and frustration associated with the loss of the other parent—their own pain and that of their children. This is a difficult time, and one that is difficult to prepare for. Death of a spouse ranks as the most stressful problem encountered in adult life. And a divorce is a kind of death—the death of a marriage and a family structure. Books dealing with death and divorce suggest three or four possible stages of grief and sorrow. First, there is a period of shock. The loss is sometimes denied—perhaps accepted intellectually but not emotionally. There is a feeling of numbness, as though the loss cannot possibly have happened or is happening to someone else. Second, there is a stage of anger, bitterness, resentment at the world or the person lost. Even if the person has died and had no choice in the leaving, the surviving parent may be angry at being left. Third, there is a stage of depression in which the person experiences the sadness and sense of loss. Memories of the person or marriage are gone over, and the loss becomes real. And then comes a period of acceptance of what has happened.

Not everyone goes through mourning in this way. And those who do progress through the stages at varying rates. But everyone who experiences a deep loss must, finally, accept the loss and begin to build a new life. This process may take far longer than has been estimated. In the past, psychiatrists considered that about a year after the death of a spouse the mature adult was ready to take up life again in the usual fashion. Depression lasting beyond a year was considered a sign of more than average difficulty in coping with the loss. More recent studies suggest that about two years may be the more usual period of mourning. Even the individual who seeks a divorce goes through a period of coming to accept the death of a marriage.

If prolonged illness and pain precede death of a parent, the surviving parent comes to the mourning period with a long history of stress and coping that will make the experience different from one in which the loss resulted from an accident. If a spouse suddenly announces he or she is leaving, the remaining parent may be in a state of shock for longer than if the couple has agonized for months before agreeing to separate—then the decision may be a relief that releases energy for coping.

Regardless of the circumstances surrounding the loss, the grief work must be done. The bereaved individual needs to talk about his or her feelings and reactions, to friends, relatives, or a counselor. If the grief work is not done, the feelings that are repressed will be expressed in physical symptoms, long-lasting depression, extreme fears, and phobias. If you know that there are stages of grief, that it is customary to be numb for awhile, and that the depression you feel some time—perhaps months—after a loss can usher in acceptance, that knowledge can help you to cope. Lynn Caine, a widow, wrote, "I am convinced that if I had known the facts of grief before I had to experience them, it would not have made my grief less intense, not have lessened my misery, minimized my loss or quietened my anger. No, none of these things. But it would have allowed me to hope. It would have given me courage. I would have known that once my grief was worked through, I would be joyful again."[7]

Fitzhugh Dodson[8] makes the important point that a first step in parenting at this time is to care for the child within yourself. Self-image and self-esteem have been turned upside down by the turmoil. Each person needs support and nurturing from family and friends as a new self-image is developed. Dodson recommends professional counseling. Many community clinics provide services on a sliding scale. Also available in many urban areas are support groups for men and women, recently divorced or widowed. These are run by churches, clinics, or professionals, and can be sources of support, sharing, and new friends.

Some single parents may not find such counseling or group experiences necessary or helpful. They may prefer to plunge back into life by going back to school, joining an interest group or a chapter of Parents Without Partners. Dodson suggests that if you have recently lost a partner, you should seek out new friends of the same sex with whom you can discuss your problems. In large cities, many women's centers or women's health collectives provide such opportunities.

At the same time the parent is coping with loss, developing a support group, and finding pleasurable activities, she or he must help children experience and come to terms with the same loss. Often at the time of the death or divorce, the remaining parent is overwhelmed and feels unable to give support to children. Many say, after they have gone through the grief process, that their greatest regret was their inability to respond to children at that time. Children have enormous needs to understand what is happening, to grieve over their loss, and to get comfort. When they see the parent in distress, children are often reluctant to ask questions or request affection. They don't want to upset the parent more. When parents understand children's needs, they often find the energy and composure to discuss the situation and give comfort. Many find that in the process of helping their children, they, themselves, receive comfort.

Coping with the death of a parent

There are both similarities and differences in the effects of the loss of a parent through death and through divorce, and in ways of coping with these experiences. Earl Grollman writes, "One of the greatest crises in the life of a child is the death of a parent. Never again will the world be as secure a place as it was before. The familiar design of family life is completely disrupted. The child suffers not only the loss of the parent, but is deprived of the attention he needs at a time when he craves that extra reassurance that he is cared for."[9]

Telling children How can one tell a child a parent has died? Just exactly what is said depends on the age of the child and the famly's view of death. Very young children below the age of five have a limited conception of death and may consider it a reversible condition; one dies but comes back to life again at a later time. Between six and eight or nine, children recognize that death happens and is irreversible, but it happens mainly to other people. Because logical thinking is not yet established, children may associate unrelated events with death. One boy had heard that Abraham Lincoln was shot to death. When told of his grandfather's death, the boy asked, "Who shot him?" Sometimes a child associates death with the place that it occurred and refuses to go there. For example, if a child thinks that hospitals cause death, he may be afraid to go to a hospital. Children from three to nine can be both very curious and emotional about death. As children get into the preadolescent years, they begin to understand death about as well as adults do.

In giving explanations about death, parents should be truthful and should phrase the information in a way that makes sense to the child. The child's questions will indicate the need for more information, which the parent can then give. It is not always possible to be both truthful and helpful. In telling her daughter about the death of the child's brother, one mother[10] found herself telling a lie to help the child understand the reason for the death. Robby had died of a chronic heart condition after years of illness and treatment. When the mother told her daughter that he had died because he was sick, her daughter answered that he had been sick many times, but he always got well. In desperation, the mother finally said Robby had died because he had been in pain, although, in fact, he had not been. The child could understand this. Years later she said that that statement, although false, was the only one that made sense to her. She was grateful that her mother, who was usually very honest, had told a lie. Remember, though, that in most situations it is possible to be both honest and helpful.

Each situation is unique and needs to be handled with sensitivity. So it is impossible to determine exactly what a parent should say. Grollman does list explanations to avoid. Do not describe heaven and tell the child that the dead parent is happy for eternity, if you do not believe this yourself. A child will sense the discrepancy between what a parent says and how the parent feels and will become more confused. It is unwise to say that a parent has gone on a long journey. The child may focus on the return or feel angry at being abandoned. One child, told that his mother had gone on a journey, cursed every time he heard her name, until he was told she had died and was shown her grave. When he understood his mother's absence, the boy was sad but no longer felt abandoned or rejected by her. It is also unwise to say that the parent died "because God loves good people and wants them in heaven." If goodness is rewarded with death, the child may shun good behavior or assume that those who live long lives are, in some undetectable way, bad. When death is equated with sleep, some children begin to fear sleep and are unwilling to go to bed.

Children's reactions Once the information is given, how can we expect the child will experience the grief? John Bowlby[11] of the Tavistock Clinic in London describes three phases similar to those experienced by adults: (1) protest when the child cannot accept the death and tries to regain the parent, (2) pain and despair as the child gradually accepts the death, and (3) acceptance and hope that life goes on.

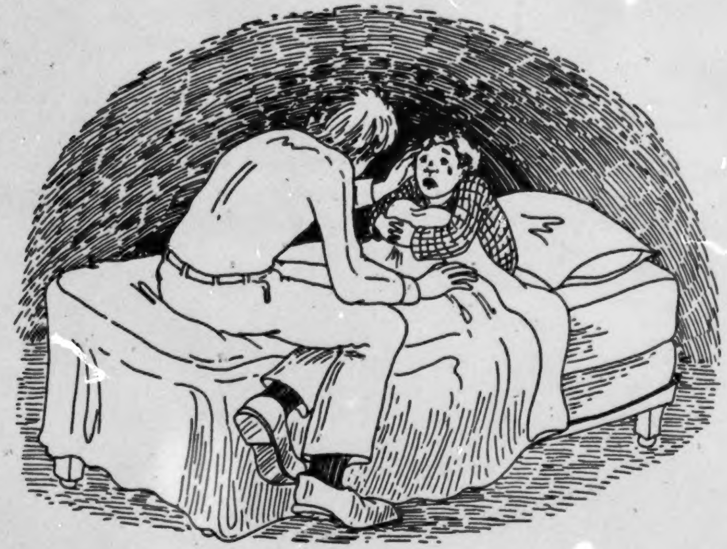
After the child has been told of the parent's death, experts agree it is wise to include the child in as much of the funeral and formal mourning process as seems comfortable to parent and child. Experts agree that, unless children protest, they should view the body to understand that the parent is truly gone. However, this is not a rigid rule and if either a parent or child feels too upset, or if the body of the dead parent has been devastated by disease or injury, then this is not wise. During the mourning period surrounding the funeral and burial, family members may be surprised when young children, although devastated with grief, may scamper away to play, only to cry bitter tears an hour later. Parents should not hold back their own tears and they should not discourage children from crying. Tears are a healthy release of emotion, and many books on grief and mourning recognize the healing quality of tears. Also, do not encourage children to "Be brave!" or "Be a little man!" Rather, say realistically, "Yes, this is a hard time for you. Life is very sad now." Such statements acknowledge grief without minimizing it. However, parents should not insist on a display of grief.

Grollman[12] lists a variety of children's reactions to death; many adults have similar responses.

1. Denial: "I dreamt it! Mommy is coming home tomorrow." The child cannot accept the death because it is too painful.

2. Anxiety expressed in bodily symptoms: The child develops symptoms the dead parent had or symptoms expressing tension and sadness. "I can't eat," "I have stomach pains."
3. Hostile reactions: "Why did Mommy leave me like this?" These reactions may be very upsetting to the surviving parent.
4. Guilt reactions: "Daddy died because I didn't wash the dishes right. I killed him."
5. Hostile reactions: Anger at doctors, nurses, or the surviving parent, who did not do what they should have to save the parent.
6. Panic: "Who will love me now?" The child anticipates being abandoned by the remaining parent through death or remarriage.
7. Replacement: The child looks for a family member or friend who will move in and take the parent's place.
8. Taking on mannerisms or habits of deceased parent: The child tries to be like the dead person in interests, activities, and personal traits, as a way of replacing the person who had died.
9. Idealization: "No one can say anything against Mommy. She was wonderful."

Healthy mourning may include some or all of the above reactions. Mourning becomes unhealthy when such reactions persist continuously many months after the death and interferes with a return to satisfying activities. The reactions of some children and adults may be so marked during the grieving period that they hallucinate about the dead person. This is one of the few situations in life in which hallucinations can occur in the course of a healthy adaptation to a crisis.



A frequent reaction in a serious crisis, and one that has to be handled carefully, is guilt. Young children, particularly, often assume they are personally responsible for what happens even though they are in no way involved. The surviving parent must be very alert to pick up on statements suggesting guilt and should introduce the possibility that the child feels guilt, even if the child has not mentioned it. For example: "Sometimes when a person dies, those close to her wonder if something they did was related to the death. I sometimes think, 'Would things have been different if I had called the doctor sooner?' But I know everything was done that could be done. Do you ever wonder or have thoughts like that?"

Gordon[13] gives the example of a mother who actively listened as her three-year-old asked such painful questions as, "When is Daddy coming home?" and "Where did they put him?" One night, two months after the father's death, the boy awoke and began crying and saying that his daddy was dead. As the mother reflected his upset, the boy was able to talk about how much he missed his father and wanted him back. The mother thought that after this expression of feeling her son seemed less anxious about the death. This three-and-a-half-year-old asked many questions that were hard for the mother to answer. But she responded as well as she could, without criticism or complaint.

When you understand and accept the child's feelings and respond with empathy and love, you help the child move through the grief process. As memories of the parent are recalled and relived, the death gradually becomes real. At times the child may want to express unbearable pain or anger by striking at pillows or engaging in some physical activity. This can be encouraged. The child's individual reaction to death always should be respected. Grollman sums up the most helpful parental responses:

> Demonstrate in word and touch how much he (the child) is truly loved. A stable and emotionally mature adult who accepts the fact of death with courage and wisdom will bring the truth to the youngster that the business of life is life. Emotional energy formerly directed toward the absent person must now be directed toward the living. This does not mean wiping out the memories of the deceased. Even in death, the absent member can and should remain a constructive force in family life and be remembered in love without constant bitterness or morbidity.[14]

Coping with divorce

The experience of divorce has many similarities to that of the death of a parent. The major difference is that the absent parent is still alive, even though the marriage and the family unit have died. Children's reactions to divorce depend on their ages, the circumstances surrounding the divorce, and the arrangements both parents make to care for and be with the children.

Telling children How parents tell children of an impending divorce will depend on the particular circumstances. But, again, it is wise to speak as honestly and simply as possible. If both parents accept the divorce, children will also. In phrasing the statements, parents might be guided by these words suggested by

Frances Ilg and Louise Ames: "When people marry, they hope that they will be happy together and live together always. But that sometimes doesn't work out that way. And that when it doesn't, and when they cannot live happily together, that they often feel it is better to live apart."[15]

Parents then need to reassure the child that both parents still love the child and will care for her even though they cannot live together. They also must reassure children that the divorce was not their fault. Even when parents have argued often and bitterly about issues unrelated to children, the children may blame themselves for the divorce—they may think, for example, that if they had been more loving, quicker to mind, the parents would have stayed together.

There are many things you should not say. Do not burden your children with your own negative views of the other parent. Do not blame the other parent for all the problems. And do not ask children to take sides—they usually need and want to be loyal to both parents. Parents may be surprised at the loyalty that the children feel to both parents, to the marriage, and to the family. Even when one parent has abused the other or the children, children often want the abusive parent present in the family. Even when children are willing to accept a parent's absence, they often do not want anything negative said about him or her. One ten-year-old said to her mother, "I know you don't love Daddy anymore, but I don't want to hear you say that you don't love him." Most experts believe that, no matter how necessary the divorce, children will nurture the hope that the parents will get back together and remarry. Even though years may pass and one or both parents remarry, many children still hope that by some fluke parents will fall in love again. Parents can accept these feelings and reflect them without indicating that the child's wish will be granted.

Impact of divorce Judith Wallerstein and Joan Kelly[16] have done extensive clinical research on the impact of divorce, and they have instituted counseling services for all family members. After five years of following families with children ranging in age from three to eighteen, they reached the following conclusions.

First, divorce is a death of the family as it has been structured. All family members have to form new relationships with each other. Unless there are supports from parents or others, the child is unlikely to achieve the complex and painful adjustments needed. Second, divorce is a disorganizing process that extends over several years, not a time-limited crisis that is resolved in a brief period of a few months. Adults often require several years to establish new jobs, interests, and social relationships. Although most adults survive the disruptions, a two- to three-year period of disorganization in a child's life can more seriously disturb development. Third, the entire post-separation period, not the pre-divorce period or divorce events alone, determine how well the child will manage. The parents' abilities to function and to provide structure following the divorce are important. Fourth, older children and teen-agers manage best if parents do not lean on them for advice or emotional support. Nevertheless, parents and children can talk over many issues, including their individual reactions to the divorce, provided parents do not depend on children to support their points of view.

Fifth, counseling can be helpful in the period right after the separation, when new arrangements are being made. Opportunities for parents and older children to talk to neutral persons about custody, visitation rights, and finances, can help them to understand what they are feeling and to resolve these problems. In these sessions, parents can focus on how best to provide for children. Sixth, even if parents have had other kinds of therapy, divorce counseling that focuses on children's needs and on parent-child relationships is useful. It sensitizes parents to their children's behavior in ways that other therapies directed at the parents' problems do not.

Children's reactions Wallerstein and Kelly have found that, although some emotional reactions are experienced by children of all ages—sadness, fear, depression, anger, confusion, and sometimes relief, the predominant emotions vary with age and require somewhat different reactions from parents. In the preschool years, children often feel abandoned and overwhelmed by the events. They worry that they may have caused the divorce. Although usually they try hard to handle their feelings with denial, they need parents who will talk to them and explain what is happening, not once but many times. Children may regress, begin wetting the bed, have temper tantrums, and develop fears. Parents can help most by providing emotional support. Wallerstein and Kelly believe that outside interventions are not as useful as interventions by parents. They urge that parents (1) communicate with the child about the divorce and the new adjustments, explaining in simple language the reasons for each change that occurs, and (2) reduce the child's suffering, where possible, by giving reassurance that his needs will be met and by doing concrete things such as arranging visits with the absent parent.

Preschool children are often protected, initially, by their ability to deny what is happening. The five- to seven-year-olds are vulnerable because they understand more but do not have the maturity to cope with what they see and hear. The most outstanding reaction of the child this age is sadness and grief. The child may deny that the parents are really divorcing, rationalize that the divorce is between the parents and will not affect him, or, pretend that at some time the parents will be together again. But these often used defenses do not make the pain go away, and the child is not yet old enough or independent enough to arrange activities that will bring pleasure and some relief from the worry. The divorce dominates the thoughts of a child this age. One little girl, whose parents had just divorced, was asked what she would like if she could have just three wishes. Her reply—"First, that my daddy would come home. Second, that my parents would get back together. And third, that they would never, ever divorce again."[17]

Fear is another frequent response. Children worry that no one will love them or care for them. The world has fallen apart and there is no safe place. Many children feel that only a father can maintain discipline in the family.

Preschoolers and children in the early elementary years have difficulty with counseling because talking about the situation is so painful. A monologue from a therapist who talks about the divorce and describes the fears, the sadness, the worries the child is experiencing can be helpful.[18] For example, one therapist worked with an eight-year-old boy who wouldn't talk because he was afraid he would cry. She told him that she talked to many other children whose parents were divorced and they often felt very sad about the family break-up and sometimes mad at the parents because they would not stay together. She sympathized and said that it was hard for the boy to know how to act because he did not want to hurt his parents. The boy eagerly nodded his head, indicating that was how he felt. Most parents cannot start by saying they have talked to many children about divorce, but they can start by saying they have read an article or seen a television show on divorce that says children sometimes have whatever feelings the child seems to be showing. Then the child has an opportunity to express his reactions.

Children nine or ten and older may find outside intervention useful, and three to four weeks of counseling may help them sort out their feelings and begin to decide how they feel about issues of custody and visitation. Counseling provides a neutral, third party to validate the child's feelings. When children are depressed, angry, worried, it is reassuring for them to hear a professional person say, "Yes, this is a very difficult time, and it is understandable that you feel upset and sad." The child can then accept his feelings more easily.

In helping older children handle divorce, parents need to keep in mind that children may feel responsible—they may feel they have done something that has brought about the divorce. Parents need to say clearly and often, when opportunities occur, that the divorce was *not* caused by the children, that it *was* caused by difficulties between the parents. In addition, parents need to remember that children worry about them and how they are doing. It is not always possible to confine grief and distress to times when the children are not there, but you can help the children by trying to wait until you are alone to express your sadness or anger.

The children of a divorcing or divorced couple need, perhaps more than anything else, to be able to talk with their parents about what is happening. Parents can encourage children to ask questions and to express their feelings. And they should respond to questions with clear statements. Children need to know what the practical arrangements for their lives are—where they will be living and with whom. And they need to know that their parents continue to care about their welfare and about their feelings.

Parents' reactions When parents cope well with the trauma of divorce, they help the children as well as themselves to handle the stresses of this period. Children and adults are helped to function well when the parents are able to reestablish structure and some stability in their lives. This is particularly true of the household in which the children live, but it is also true for the parent who does not have custody.

Before, during, and after divorce, some disorganization of the family life and routines is almost inevitable. Mealtimes and bedtimes are likely to be irregular, family members may not always eat together, the bedtime story may be forgotten for a while, and the household is probably more chaotic than usual in the morning before school and work. But gradually, as emotions are dealt with and everyone gets used to the new arrangements, order and stability can be recreated.

The relationships between parents and children are most changed in the first year of the divorce. During the second year routine is gradually reestablished.

Fathers are usually more available to children in the first year after the divorce, but tend to be less available as time passes. Both divorced parents at first make fewer demands on their children for mature behavior, perhaps because they are being sympathetic with the children's feelings. They do not ask children to be independent and self-sufficient. Additionally, at a time when most children need to talk, parents talk less to their children. Parents are less likely to ask for their children's opinions and to give explanations. In brief, because of their own distress, parents were not able to use the more effective, but also more time-consuming, techniques of childrearing.

Divorced parents are less consistent in what they ask for and less firm in following through on their requests. In addition, divorced mothers and fathers are not consistent with each other in their ways of relating to their children. Mothers try to exercise control by giving commands and being more restrictive, but children resist or ignore them. Fathers, just after the separation, indulge children because they want them to enjoy the time spent together. However, as time passes, they become more restrictive. Mothers, as time passes, use fewer negative commands and gradually return to praise and more positive modes of intervention. When children most need support from parents, the parent-child relationships change as parents use less effective methods of interaction. Thus, in addition to the confusion of the divorce, children have to learn new ways of relating to parents, and with time, unlearn them as parents return to their more usual patterns.

The main predictor of good parent-child relationships following divorce is the parents' ability to relate to each other. When parents continue to respect each other, to agree on discipline, and to be consistent with children, children are likely to adapt well. When parents continue to be angry, bitter, and distressed with each other, it is harder to establish an organized family life that sustains the children. When other individuals like grandparents, friends, or housekeeper contribute support, the mother's effectiveness increases. But support from outside the family is not as important as a positive relationship between the mother and father.

CREATING A SUPPORT SYSTEM

We all need people in our lives—friends to have fun with, to share the downs and the ups, the special moments and even the dailiness. The single parent, more than most individuals, needs adults to whom he or she can turn for companionship and for help. Friends who will babysit for a few hours, who will troop along on a picnic or a visit to the zoo, who will show her how to put a new plug on the vacuum cleaner or will fix a meal for the children if she is sick, friends who are not judgmental or patronizing, who will listen and be supportive.

One way of obtaining support and coping with the stresses of divorce, death, or single parenthood without a mate is returning to live in the home of one's parents. Grandparents can be loving, stable babysitters who enrich children's lives in ways that no one else can. The mother can work and carry on a social life, knowing that her child is well-cared for in her absence. And this arrangement usually reduces living expenses. When mother and grandparents agree on childrearing techniques and the mother is respected in the household as a mature adult, this solution may be attractive.

However, such an arrangement can reflect neurotic needs of both the mother and the grandparents—when this is true it is likely to create additional problems for the child. If the grandmother was a protective mother who refused to allow the daughter to become independent, that relationship may continue. The daughter may have tried to escape into a marriage which did not last. If the daughter then returns to her parents' home, she may have to start again to develop her independence. She will have to establish new supports that will enable her to become more independent, and to continue her growth as an individual.

Most single parent families live on relatively small incomes. Money for a housekeeper or an after-school babysitter may reduce the amount available for recreation or even for clothing. Yet the children must be cared for and the chores must be done. How does the single parent arrange for all this while working full time?

Dodson recommends bartering services. He tells of a woman who exchanged her typing skills for the gardening talents of a writer—she not only got her yard work done, but she met the man who became her husband. *Momma: The Sourcebook for Single Mothers*[19] contains ideas for pooling resources and is as useful for single fathers as mothers. Suggestions include sharing a home or apartment with another single parent family, exchanging child-care services with a mother who does not work the same hours, and combining resources to increase purchasing power. All these things take time, a precious commodity, but all of them can help the single parent enhance her family's life style, and they all include the bonus of being ways to meet new people.

This is especially important for women, whose social lives, more than those of men, are likely to be minimal after divorce or widowhood. To some extent this is the result of limited resources, which restrict the amount of money available for baby-sitters and for appropriate clothes. To some extent it is the result of social discomfort with the single person felt by married couples. But another factor, and one that the single mother can more easily deal with, is the guilt many women feel about spending any of their precious free time away from the children, or about thinking of becoming involved in another relationship after the death of a beloved spouse. To combat such guilt, Dodson suggests that single parents should contemplate the absurdity of total devotion to their children. The fuller and happier the life of the single parent, the fuller and happier the life of the children.

If children are a single parent's sole source of social companionship, they feel both a burden and a sense of importance that can be handicapping. The burden consists in trying to make Mommy happy, to give her a good time because she seems to have no other friends. Children may resent being tied to the single parent, especially if they are old enough to want to be off with friends or involved in activities. If parents focus all their energy on their children, some children will come to expect it and will feel rejected when parents do seek adult friends.

Some parents use their children's needs as excuses for avoiding social situations in which they are uncomfortable. They may experience fear, lack of confi-

BOX 12-1
SUGGESTIONS FOR SINGLE MOTHERS

1. Take classes with your children and work on a joint project together as equals. Developing new skills together brings a new dimension to the relationship between parent and child.
2. Use sleeping bags for bedding. They are comfortable and even young children can make their beds in the morning.
3. Form a cooperative group with friends and clean each other's houses as a team. It not only saves time, but it is an enjoyable social occasion.
4. Spend twenty or thirty minutes each day with each child. The child feels cared for and is less likely to nag at other times.
5. Form cooperative babysitting groups and trade off weekends as well as evenings.
6. Arrange door latches and hooks for clothes and mirrors so small children can use them easily.
7. Form a food cooperative with several families so that you can buy in bulk and save money.
8. Pool money for living expenses with another single parent and find a bigger and perhaps more enjoyable place for the two families. Babysitting will be easier, and there will be two adults to manage the household.

Adapted from: Hope, K. and Young, N., eds., *Momma: The Sourcebook for Single Mothers*. New York: New American Library, 1976, pp. 314–321.

dence, or self-consciousness about dating, and decide to stay home "because Joey needs me." One way to ease back into dating is to join a group such as Parents Without Partners. Participation in the PTA or in community activities is another way to meet neighbors. And many single parents take classes at local colleges and art centers.

EFFECTS OF FATHER-ABSENCE

As single parents face the task of rearing children alone, they want to know the effects of parent-absence on children, so that they can compensate for the absence. Here we discuss primarily father-absence, a term referring to homes where there is no father or no father substitute. When fathers are gone, children may have no males to play a protective role, since day care centers and schools are staffed primarily by women.

While many children do grow up in a father-absent home, very few grow up with no mother substitute. A father alone with children is likely to have a female relative who cares for the children, or he may hire household help to serve as a substitute. If the children are placed in day care or school, the caretakers are usually women. In these situations the child does not develop the same kind of attachment that a child has for a mother, but clearly these are maternal figures.

It is difficult to disentangle the effects of father-absence from the effects of the financial problems that almost always accompany such absence. Preschool boys separated from fathers at an early age are most affected by the absence. In comparison to age mates, they tend to be less aggressive, more dependent, more feminine in interests and in self-concept. As these children go off to school and interact with other boys, the dependency decreases and aggressiveness increases. If boys are six or older at the time of separation, there is less effect on the child's masculinity. The presence of older male models increases appropriate sex-typing.

Both boys and girls from father-absent homes have difficulties with some intellectual tasks.[20] In particular, they have been found to score lower on math and science tests. However, such difficulties may result, not from poorer abilities, but from personal qualities that fail to develop when a family is disrupted. Children may not develop the persistence and attention to detail that are particularly required for math and science. Adolescent girls from father-absent homes show two kinds of problems.[21] Either they are very anxious, shy, and inhibited, or they are too assertive, provocative, and somewhat promiscuous. Girls from widowed homes tend to be shy, and girls from divorced homes tend to be assertive. Similar

behavior is found with peers and adults, and this pattern persists into the adult years. Daughters of divorced women are likely to marry at younger ages and tend to be pregnant at the time of marriage, while daughters of widows may avoid men and marry later.

The critical factor may not be the absence of the father, but the mother's attitude toward the father. Divorced mothers, while they love their daughters and use the same parenting techniques as other parents, are likely to be unhappy women with low self-concepts and an angry attitude toward their ex-husbands. They may view their marriages negatively and may feel they got little support from others after the divorce. Nevertheless, a happy marriage is important to them and they are likely to feel deprived. In contrast, widows have a positive view of their husbands and their marriages and feel they received support from other people at the time of the death. Girls from father-absent homes are likely to be anxious around men. In young adulthood, they are more likely to select men who are similar to their fathers than are girls from intact families. At least two factors seem to affect girls from father-absent homes. The first is lack of contact and experience with men. The second is the mother's attitude toward herself. If she feels unloved and unwanted without a man, her daughter may marry early to create the happiness that has eluded the mother.

Many single mothers do rear children successfully. How do they compensate for the absence of the father? Primarily by providing contact with men—relatives, friends, stepfathers, grandfathers—who love and care for children. If possible, this should include continuing relationships in which these men play with the children, teaching and guiding their behavior, recognizing achievements, and helping to correct mistakes.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The three main tasks of single parents are (1) to establish effective channels of communication so emotions are expressed and important information is clearly exchanged, (2) to reestablish a stable family structure, and (3) to reestablish an active social life with persons of the opposite sex. In order to maintain a stable family setting, whether the child lives with the parent or only visits, parents can take several steps.

First, single parents need to develop the entire range of parenting techniques. In most two-parent families, one parent—often the mother—is the sympathetic comforter, the one who understands. The other parent—usually the father—is the just authority, the one who sees that agreements and bargains are kept and limits are obeyed. In single parent families, one parent has to take on both roles and shift from one to the other as the situation demands. While this requires flexibility and practice, it also helps parents to expand their personalities, to become richer individuals as well as better parents.

Second, parents must help children to develop increased competencies. A single parent who works and cares for children must rely on the children to help keep the family unit functioning. Children may have more chores and greater independence than their peers. Increased responsibility can lead to increased self-esteem, if neither parent nor child perceives it as an unfair burden. One mother[22] of a son, seven, and a daughter, eleven, described the process the three went through to work together to complete all the chores, and the advantages that came to the family unit as a result. They held a family meeting, listed all the chores that had to be done in the household, and each took some chores. A list was signed as an indication of willingness to carry out the work. When the children found the chores conflicted with after-school activities, the family had another meeting. The children spontaneously suggested getting up earlier in the morning to finish their work before school. Also, the three decided to impose consequences if the jobs were not completed. As the children did their chores, mother praised all the work even though it may not have been done exactly as she would have done it. Then her son and daughter decided that they wanted more variety in their work, and again, the family sat down as a unit. They listed all the chores and made a huge, daily chart, indicating exactly what each person did on each day. This system worked well for the family for five years.

The mother came up with these suggested guidelines: (1) Make sure everyone contributes to the list of weekly chores, and make the list as complete as possible. (2) If children volunteer for jobs you believe are too hard for them, let them try; if they fail, the chores can be redistributed at the next family meeting. (3) Have as many meetings as necessary to list and divide all the chores, so the chores get done and each person is reasonably pleased with his or her list. (4) Let each child be creative and do each job in his way, at least the first time. If the result is inadequate, talk about other ways to do the chore.

The parent who feels, even unrealistically, responsible for having deprived the children of the other parent may be unwilling to ask for help with chores. Such a parent may try to compensate for the absence of the other by giving gifts and privileges and being flexible about rules and limits. The parent who responds this way helps neither the children nor herself. Especially during the time surrounding separation, divorce, or the illness and death of a parent, children need to be comforted and to be encouraged to express their feelings. But it is important to remember that there is comfort in structure. The parent who sets limits and is consistent with discipline is communicating that she cares about the children. Remember, too, that when family members work together, they are communicating and cooperating and sharing experiences that mean as much as those they have when they play together. The parent who is inclined to feel guilty may find support in the words of Ilg and Ames:

> Not having a father is a serious lack, but there are a great many handicaps equally severe—serious mental or physical difficulties, being members of a minority group in an excessively intolerant community, living in an "unbroken" home where quarreling and hateful discord is the order of the day.
>
> Nearly all children have to learn to face some adverse circumstances, to accept them, and to go on from there.
>
> If, as a divorced mother (or father), you allow yourself to feel too sorry for your poor son or daughter who is having to grow up without a

father's close companionship, your oversolicitude may well do him more harm than the absence of his father.[23]

When two single parents share the care of their children, the children may, at times try to play one parent off against the other with such statements as, "I don't have to do that when I am at Daddy's" or "Mommy lets me stay up much later than you do." Even when parents are living in the same household, they do not always agree on discipline, so single parents should not feel apologetic about wanting different behaviors from children. Gordon recognizes that parents are different people and that such differences, if openly discussed and handled with children, can be respected by the children. Children look up to adults who do not try to hide their differences. Children will feel more comfortable and be able to adjust to difference when parents are able to accept them.

Like the children of two parent families, children in single parent families need firm and fair limits. Lack of limits can create problems. Whether parents choose to use I-messages, to have family councils, or to write contracts, they need to take the time and energy to set up rules and routines that are agreeable to all.

Having established stable routines within the family, single parents must begin to find people outside the family to serve as substitutes for the missing parent. The brothers and cousins of single mothers can serve as male models for their sons, as can athletic coaches or Scout leaders. Time spent with men who can help guide their development is also important for girls, and mothers will have to make special efforts to find male coaches, male music teachers, or male school teachers who will interact with girls as fathers, brothers, or uncles would. It is unwise to have the mother's male friends fill this role. The child needs to feel that the man is interested in him or her, and that the relationship is not dependent on the man's attachment to the mother.

The single parent's ability to establish a happy, satisfying way of life for himself or herself is critical to the child's healthy adaptation. The effective parent serves as a model for coping as well as a source of solid support for the child. If single parents can reach out and enjoy pleasurable relations with other people, inside or outside the extended family, can find parenting techniques that fit their personalities and situations, and can feel good about themselves and what they do, their children will prosper.

Infancy

Infancy may be the most difficult period for a single parent. It is a very special time in the life of a child—a time of firsts, of rapid growth and change, of emerging personality and physical characteristics. It may be the time when parent and child feel closest to each other. Certainly it is the time when the child needs the most care and attention and creates the most work. It is a hard time not to have the other parent there, to help with the work and to share the special moments that are so miraculous and so fleeting. Even though the father in a two parent family may be at home for only a few hours each day, he does observe and enjoy the infant's growth in ways that outsiders often do not. He shares with the mother both the joys and the strains of each day, gives feedback and support, and provides some relief from child care.

Infancy is a hard time, for mothers especially, to have to be away at work many hours each day. And the single parent who is able to stay home with an infant may find that the isolation and lack of contact with other adults places special burdens on her.

Single fathers, whether they have full-time custody or visiting privileges, have their hands full as they try to nurture an infant and take full responsibility for the care of a child without language. Fathers may be especially uncomfortable with a young child who requires so much physical care—changing diapers, feeding, and bathing—and may find the lack of language a great problem. However, with practice many find that they very much enjoy satisfying the needs of a child who is completely dependent on them.

The single parent who works—and most do—needs to find a good day care arrangement for the infant. This can be a relative, the parent's mother, or perhaps a married sister who stays home with her own children. Or it may be a woman who earns money by taking care of a few young children in her home. The single parent with sufficient income may find it most desirable to employ someone to come to her home to take care of the infant. Such a baby-sitter/housekeeper can help take care of the home as well as the child. Whatever arrangement is made, the most important consideration is the personality of the caretaker. Is she warm and responsible? Will she truly care about as well as for the child? Will she follow the parent's childrearing philosophy? The parent who is going to leave an infant in the care of another person should get to know that person and should have an opportunity to see how the caretaker interacts with the child before making a decision.

Early childhood

Toddlerhood presents special problems for a single mother. If she has thoroughly enjoyed the physical closeness and caregiving of infancy, she may find the child's desire for independence distressing. When the child wants to feed herself, the mother may prefer to do it for her. If she wants to climb on furniture or stairs, the mother may become overly protective, wanting her to remain a baby. When the "Me do it" and "No" stages begin, the mother may feel abandoned and rejected. This description of a single mother illustrates what can happen.

> When her son was about two years old, Elaine came to visit a psychologist, weeping and in a clear state of panic. She explained that she suddenly found herself being extremely punitive to her child, to the point she was afraid she might really abuse him. She came for treatment because she was simply overwhelmed at the extent of her anger. For two years she had showered the baby with love, had thought of no one but him, and suddenly, she said, she felt as though she "hated him." After her attacks of rage, she would sink into terrible depression, her guilt as all-encompassing as the fury that had caused it.
>
> Through extensive therapy, she was made to see that the loneliness she had always suffered from was reactivated by her child's growing independence. For his first two years of life, when his extreme dependence was sym-

bolic proof of love, the loneliness had been quieted. But now that it had emerged again, her anger grew from feeling it was "the baby's fault." Simply by growing up he was no longer fulfilling his role, which was to keep the loneliness quieted.[24]

Single parents need to establish firm limits that are not too restrictive. Mothers must act in an authoritative way, so that children respect the limits. Single parent families often lack this kind of consistent, firm control, which children need if they are to master their behavior. All parents can establish limits, reward valued behaviors with time and attention, and ignore or restrict undesirable behaviors. The single mother must provide for herself or must get from friends the kind of emotional support that enables her to be the fair but firm authority. Some women take on this role for the first time with their children. Doing this without the consistent, daily support of another parent is difficult but necessary. Brazelton writes:

> It must be harder for a lone parent to be sure of what's important and what needs a tough approach. Almost anything can be rationalized, and worked around—and it's often easier to do that than to face the ordeal of punishing a child if one is not quite sure of oneself.
>
> With a lone parent, the area of limits and punishment may be even more important. Since there is no male figure in the Belew household to represent authority, it becomes Mrs. Belew's role. Often it may seem artificial, and she may have to be tougher than she would want to be for the pure value of making a point of authority. It is important that Tony and she both recognize the symbolic value of her authority.[25]

The single father must recognize the importance of empathizing with the child's struggle for independence without being too harsh or too indulgent. The single father who is trying to win or hold his child's love may be inclined to give in to a tantrum or to let the child ignore restrictions. Conversely, men who have resented authority may insist that children knuckle under to rules, as they feel they have had to do. They may be especially harsh in enforcing limits and may allow their children few opportunities to assert individual wishes.

A single mother who lives with her parents in a three-generation family may find that her limits are different from the grandparents. In some situations the grandparents may be too indulgent, quicker to give in, to offer treats when punishment has been imposed. In other situations they may be too strict, too quick to demand mature behavior from the very young child. Family councils or mutual problem-solving sessions with all three adults participating can help to establish firm limits that all the adults will enforce.

During toddlerhood single mothers can try to provide increasing and regular contact with men in the family or with male babysitters. However, it is also important for mothers to realize that masculinity is developed in part as a result of the mother's response to the child's masculine behaviors. Single mothers who approve and reward their sons' assertiveness and independence will help to solidify the masculine identification that occurs in these early years.

During the preschool years parents can expect that children's wishes for romantic attachment to the parent of the opposite sex may be intensified. From the child's point of view, the rival is gone, and the fantasies may be gratified. Parents can recognize and accept the child's wishes while indicating that such wishes cannot be gratified.

Both boys and girls need contact with a man who is interested in them, will engage in play, and will be available for questions and conversations. Because children in this age group are still too young for group activities with men as leaders, parents have to rely on relatives, on babysitters, or on an organization like Big Brothers. Other concerns related to setting limits and maintaining relationships with the parents remain the same in this period.

Elementary school years

These may be the easiest years for single parents. Routines and limits have been established or adapted from those used as a two parent family. Children are in school for many hours each weekday and need day care only after school, when ill, and during vacations. Masculine and feminine identities are established and children are beginning to explore their many competencies in activities outside the home. They can join group activities—Cub Scouts, Indian Guides, Bluebirds, athletic teams, and informal groups of friends. Coaches, scout leaders, and male teachers are available as models for boys. The single father without custody can participate in his children's club activities, just as he would if still married to the mother.

A parent without custody has an easier time when children visit. During these years children are more curious about the world at large. They are able to enjoy and appreciate the kinds of trips a parent without custody can provide. Dodson recommends that the single father encourage his child to bring a friend—this can make the visit more pleasant for everyone. Sightseeing and traveling are more fun because children have more energy and longer attention spans and can learn a lot from such experiences. And the single father is likely to enjoy the role of expert and teacher.

Problems may arise around school work. The single parent can use mutual problem-solving or family councils to devise workable schedules for busy family members. Children have school and chores each day, and may require help with homework that the parent finds hard to give after working all day. When an older child can help a younger one to study, this strengthens the bond between the two children and relieves some of the pressure on the mother. Many teachers are willing to cooperate by allowing children to collect their work during the week in a folder. Then the child takes the folder home on Friday and the parent has all weekend to go over the work and discuss it with the child. Most teachers appreciate a parent's interest in the child's progress and respond to parental concern. And the child is responsive to attention and praise for what he is accomplishing.

The adolescent years

The single mother with adolescent children needs to demonstrate her authority. She must establish clear, reasonable limits that are agreed upon by all and she must enforce those limits. She can explain her positions and encourage her children to express their opinions. But she must continue to maintain her authority. She must express her values and opinions in a calm but confident tone. Furthermore, she must become the competent consultant who is needed for a variety of issues.

If adolescents have no other adult model, the mother may be called upon for information she is not equipped to provide. For example, the mother of a teen-age son is not likely to be as informed as his father would be about training for athletic events. She may find it difficult to talk to sons about vocational choices, because she was not making those choices at that age, and because women, still, have a more limited range of career choices. It is hard for a son to ask a single mother about sex, yet he may need to talk with someone he is close to. The single mother who finds it difficult to communicate directly with her teen-agers about some subjects can stimulate family conversations and convey her values by talking about related articles, television programs, and conversations she has had with friends and co-workers. For example, a dinnertime talk about the equal rights amendment could lead to a discussion of the importance of both partners in a relationship taking responsibility for birth control. Thus, within this context she is able to communicate her values and also to elicit her children's views on important matters. Even if children only listen and do not respond, information is conveyed and no one is particularly uncomfortable.

The single father without custody may find that during this period his relationships with his children are much like those of parents living with their offspring. Teen-agers often are busy and want to spend time with their friends, and even married parents often feel they must make appointments to see them. Single parents without custody may be reluctant to call and intrude on their children's busy lives and may feel neglected when their children do not call them. They must realize that many teen-agers want contact with parents but are hesitant to initiate it. If fathers make an effort, relationships can deepen, as seen in the following example. One father[26] had always taken an interest in what his two teen-age daughters did, but they had had few intimate conversations. After the divorce, he had tried being a Disneyland Daddy, taking the girls to exciting places but never really talking to them. Then one day he brought them to the apartment he had gradually furnished himself. They sat and talked about his new-found skills in decorating, and the three of them cooked dinner together. A few days later, the girls sent him simple recipes to use. After that day, the three had a different kind of relationship. They began to see each other as individuals who were in the process of change.

AN OPTIMISTIC VIEW

Although the difficulties are numerous, the techniques for coping are largely the same as those used in biological families. A single parent can model effective behavior, open channels of communication so both parents and children express feelings and thoughts, hold family meetings to discuss problems and needs and share solutions, and arrange cooperative work schedules to handle family chores. What is unique is the extent to which the single parent must reach outside the immediate family for help and especially to find people to fill the role usually performed by the second parent.

There is no formula that the single parent can use to create a satisfactory life style. Instead, she or he must carefully examine the needs and personalities of all family members and search creatively for ways to satisfy these. In the process of solving problems, parents and children will find the pleasures and satisfactions that come from working together to accomplish difficult tasks. Dodson sums up the process of single parenting this way:

> You have a lot going for you as a single parent, which you may tend to overlook when things get rough. First, your children's love for you is a great psychological reservoir to draw upon. Second, the psychological methods for raising children effectively are the same in a single-parent family as in a two-parent family. Third, if you are well-informed . . . you will know far more about raising children than most parents in two-parent families do. All these factors put together mean that you can do a better job of raising children in your single-parent family than most parents in a two-parent family can. So take heart, and feel confident that you will succeed.[27]

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have examined the experiences many parents go through as they cope with disruption of the family unit, come to terms with that loss, and establish new life patterns for themselves and their children. The single parent who is forming a new household needs to communicate feelings so the relationships between parents and children remain strong during all the changes. It is also essential to maintain structure in the family.

The single parent must establish the new family unit and rear children while earning a living. Supportive friends ease the way as the single parent uses ingenuity and resourcefulness to find new ways of meeting family members' needs. In the process of meeting the challenges of this kind of family unit, single parents grow as individuals. Children are relied upon to become more responsible and effective participants in family life. As they do so, their capabilities increase.

The chapter reviews special considerations for children of each age group. Although the problems increase because one adult must carry out the family's tasks alone, the sense of confidence that comes with new abilities helps parents and children to meet the challenge.

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TAKING STEPS

Erma Bombeck

In addition to imitation mayonnaise, fake fur, sugar substitutes and plastic that wears like iron, the nuclear family has added another synthetic to its life: step-people.

There are stepmothers, stepfathers, stepsons, and stepdaughters. The reception they get is varied.

Some are looked upon as relief pitchers who are brought in late, but are optimistic enough to try to win the game. Some are regarded as "double agents" who in the end will pay for their crimes. Others are just "standing in" for the Star Parent who appears out of the East on visiting day.

There are few generalizations you can make about step-people except they're all locked into an awkward family unit none of them is too crazy about.

I know. I've been there. Perhaps you've heard of me. I became a hyphenated child a few years after my "real" father died. I was the only stepchild in North America to have a stepfather who had the gall to make me go to bed when I was sleepy, insisted I do homework before I went to school, and yelled at me for wearing bedroom slippers in the snow. My *real* father wouldn't have done that.

My stepfather punished me for "sassing my mother," wouldn't allow me to waste food, and wouldn't let me spend money I didn't have. My *real* father wouldn't have done that.

My stepfather remained silent when I slammed doors in his face, patient when I insisted my mother take "my side" and emotionless when I informed him he had no rights. My *real* father wouldn't have done that.

My stepfather paid for my needs and my whims, was there through all my pain of growing up and checked himself out of the VA hospital to give me away at my wedding.

My *real* father was there all the time and I didn't know it.

What is a *real* mother, father, son or daughter? "Real" translates to something authentic, genuine, permanent. Something that exists. It has nothing to do with labor pains, history, memories, or beginnings. All love begins with one day and builds.

"Step" in the dictionary translates to "a short distance." It's shorter than you think.

SOURCE: *At Wit's End* by Erma Bombeck © 1980 by Field Enterprises, Inc. Courtesy of Field Newspaper Syndicate.

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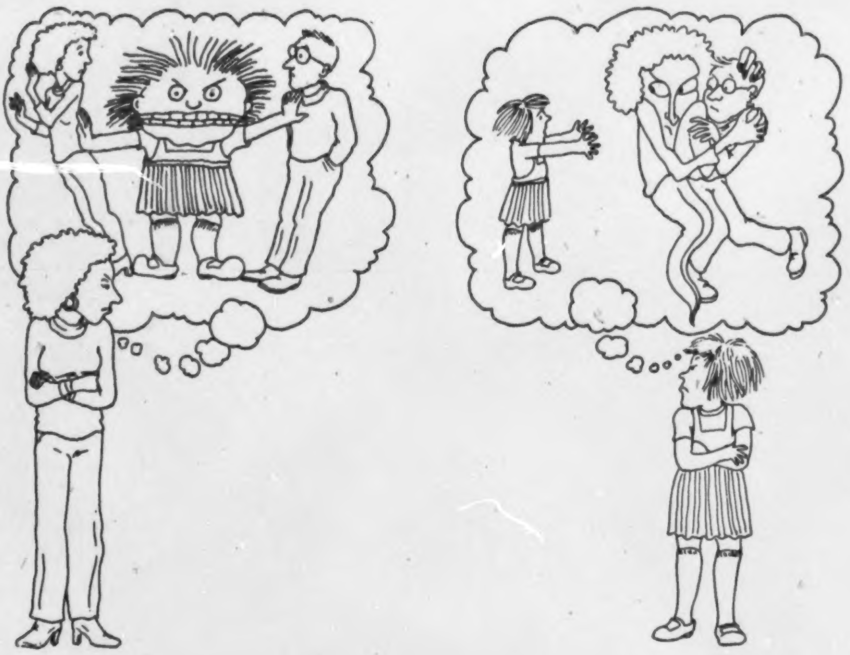
Stepparenting

We have all read about stepmothers in fairy tales like *Cinderella* and *Snow White* and about stepfathers in *Hamlet* and *Lolita*. But we read and hear less often about the close relationships that can grow between adults and children in stepfamilies. It is time to talk about the special bond that can grow between an adult and child who live together in the same house, initially as strangers, and gradually as closely attached human beings. Stepparents and stepfamilies face many challenges as they establish a home that will be nurturing and satisfying for all members. This chapter describes many of the special problems stepfamilies encounter, but we need to be aware, also, of the closeness and rewards experienced when individuals who are not biologically related form a caring family.

THE SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF STEPFAMILIES

What makes stepparenting even more difficult than parenting? After all, the biological parents of a newborn are not likely to have much more training for their new roles than does a stepparent—and they may have even less, if the stepparent has children of his own. Fitzhugh Dodson[1] presents six reasons. First, in families of biological parents and children, the parents' mistakes are overcome by long-standing emotional bonds. When a stepfamily is formed, such ties do not exist, but are created over time. Second, blended families are more complex than biological families and often include more people. When the wife and husband both have children, the family includes two sets of stepchildren. If each of the former spouses



has remarried, the two sets of children will have two stepparents plus various stepbrothers and stepsisters, and perhaps half-brothers and half-sisters. The number of grandparents also increases. Each of these people from all of these families has needs and interests that must be considered.

Third, members of blended families may have deep feelings of jealousy and ambivalence. Because so many more people are involved and have to be consulted about decisions, and the newly married parents want to devote time to their relationship, stepparents may have less time to give to individual children. Children may feel that the new marriage is depriving them of the parent. Parents must accept these feelings as realistic—there is less time for each child. Conversely, the parents may feel that the children are intruding on the marriage. Because living intimately with new people causes some stress, both parents and children may develop mixed feelings toward family members. A child's hostility may be directed at the new stepparent or stepsiblings, or at her or his own parent and brothers and sisters.

Fourth, both parents and children are haunted by the earlier marriage. Stepparents may feel insecure as they live with children who are constant proof that the spouse loved another person. Furthermore, the biological parent continues to have contact with the former spouse because of the children. When the stepparent enters the family, children must recognize that the other biological parent is no longer part of the family. If the absent biological parent has died, children may have created an idealized image of this parent that no flesh and blood person can measure up to. It is not surprising, then, that research suggests that it is harder for a stepparent to enter a family in which the absent parent has died.

Fifth, former spouses may use the children and their needs to attack the biological parent and the stepparent. One father and stepmother reported that the mother never bought the children clothes, and when the father did this in addition to the monthly payment, the mother did not wash or care for them. She let the children come for visits looking like beggars and told them the father did not care to provide enough money so she could buy clothes. Conversely, one mother reported that the father and stepmother, rather than providing money for clothes for the children, instead bought the children fancy clothes that were appropriate for the father and stepmother's life style, but not for the children's needs at school and play.

Sixth, there are no clear guidelines for being a stepparent. There are few enough for biological parents, but the role of stepparent remains even more vague. The stepparent must create this role depending on his or her individual personality, the ages and sexes of the children, and their living arrangements. When a biological parent is dead or absent and children live with the stepparent, that stepparent has a larger role. When children live with the biological parent and come only for short visits, the stepparent has a more limited role. Whatever the circumstances, stepparents can create meaningful, caring relationships with children with time, patience, and interest.

Stepparents who are forewarned about the problems of stepparenting and who think and talk, in advance, about how to cope with these problems, can find their new roles rewarding and exciting. We can usefully adopt Alice Rossi's[2] stages of transition to marriage, work, and parenting roles to understand the process of becoming a stepparent. You will recall, from Chapter Two, that Rossi describes (1) the anticipatory period, (2) the honeymoon, (3) the plateau, and (4) discontinuation or termination. Only the fourth stage does not apply here.

THE ANTICIPATORY PERIOD

The anticipatory stage includes mourning the loss of the previous family, dating, finding a prospective partner, and planning the remarriage. Parents must complete the process of grieving, described in the previous chapter, and experience the range of emotions connected with the loss of the marriage. When the loss is not accepted or the remarriage occurs so quickly that individuals do not have time to accept the loss, problems may arise in stepparenting. For example, one fourteen-year-old boy got in a series of fights with his stepfather, who married the mother one year after the divorce. He was close to his father and had not accepted the divorce. The boy resented his stepfather and, particularly after a visit with his father, got into fights with the stepfather. Counseling for the boy and the family helped him to accept his feelings of loss.

Dating

As single parents begin to date again, they may lack confidence in themselves and may fear they will repeat mistakes they made in the past. Parents may be on the alert for signs they are failing in the new relationship. A hard-working father may again find that his work habits interfere with a new relationship. A working mother may fear that her independence—which upset her first husband—will drive away the man she is beginning to feel attached to. Just as children grow when their feelings are accepted as valid, parents will grow if they can accept their own doubts, fears, and worries. When feelings are recognized and accepted, individuals can find ways to handle them.

Children react in various ways when parents begin dating. Some children are eager to have a single mother remarry, so they will have a father. Such children are likely to continually question the mother about how well she likes the men she meets and about the progress of the relationships. If a mother does not find men to date, children—particularly young children—may try to seek them out. Sometimes children hope a father will remarry because he seems lonely, and the children think they may not be affected by a stepmother they do not expect to see frequently.

Children may be resentful of a possible remarriage. They have little enough time with the parent as it is, and they resent having to share the parent's free time with a stranger. Often in single parent families, the bond between parent and child is intense, and the child wishes that to continue without the interference of outside people. Still other children have both positive and negative feelings. Whatever the reactions to dating, parents can accept them without feeling they have to do what the children want.

Primacy of the couple bond

As a dating relationship continues and is a source of pleasure to both individuals, they begin to think about making commitments to each other. Here, parenting experts and stepparents agree in insisting that parents consider the attachment to the partner the primary bond in the stepfamily. Parents are advised not to marry to give Johnny a father or Suzy a mother. The two partners must care about each other, and the marriage must come first if it is to be a success.

Psychiatrist L. Eugene Arnold,[3] writing guidelines for stepparents, uses the term "reasonable primacy of the husband-wife bond." This can be interpreted to mean that, in ordinary circumstances, the importance of the marital tie will be emphasized so children do not feel they can force the stepparent out. However, under extreme circumstances—for example, if a stepparent physically or sexually abuses a stepchild—the parent would consider the parent-child bond to be primary and would consider ending the marriage. In that situation it is the responsibility of the parent to protect the child, who is unable to protect herself or himself, from the destructive actions of the stepparent.

Prospective partners need to look at each other not only as possible mates, but also as parents to their children. In planning a first marriage, couples can fantasize and guess what they will be like as parents. If they have had extended contact with children, their fantasies may be quite realistic. When approaching remarriage, parents already have experience. They know whether they tend to use physical punishments, permit back talk, run a tight or a loose ship. Expectations and attitudes can be and must be examined. The successful merging of a group of people will depend on how well both the partners can work together to satisfy each others' needs while parenting children.

Getting to know each other

As adults consider commitments to each other, they must get to know each other's children as individuals. Going on outings without the biological parent along and spending time in projects provide useful opportunities for adults and children to become better acquainted and to form a special relationship between them. If a child is reserved at first, you must not assume you are failing. Give the child time to get to know you and to warm up.

One of the prime difficulties in many stepfamilies is that the parents have high expectations for themselves and for their relationships with the children. Because partners love each other, they assume that they will love the children and that the love will be returned immediately. Even when stepparents have known other stepparents who had difficulties in forming relationships, they believe "those people" had special problems and were coping poorly.

Unrealistic expectations are often coupled with a tendency to idealize what occurs in biological families. When this is true, comparisons always reflect badly on the stepfamily and create problems. For example, sometimes stepparents feel unappreciated. A stepmother feels that she cooks and cleans, washes and shops for children who are not her own. A stepfather earns money and provides a home for children who may consider him an intruder in the family. Stepparents may feel that in biological families children love and appreciate their parents, and in comparison, they feel cheated. Certainly in biological families there is a long history of caring between parents and children. But many biological parents believe their children do not appreciate all their efforts or value their virtues, but instead take them for granted.

It is possible that prospective stepparents may not especially enjoy contact with children. But it should be at least tolerable and perhaps potentially satisfying. Stepparents must be honest with themselves. In the blush of romance, it may be tempting to think everything will work out, the children are part of the package, and adjustments will be made. But too often the problems do not get resolved and the second marriage ends.

What if you don't really like the prospective stepchildren? Does this mean that the marriage should be called off? First, if you truly care for the other person, get professional help in evaluating the situation. It is possible that both partners are overlooking some facet of the situation that can be clarified with counseling. Second, recognize that though honesty is a requirement of relationships in the anticipatory period, enthusiasm and warmth for the children are not initial requirements for a good relationship. Often relationships build with time and increased contact, if stepparents can be honest about their initial feelings and realistic about the length of time it takes to establish closeness.

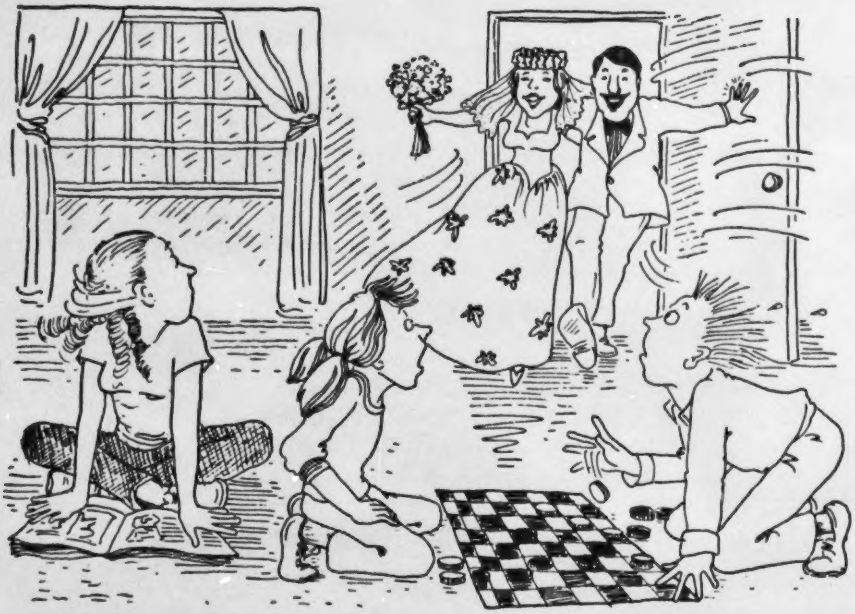
As partners and children get to know each other, the adults should discuss the specifics of discipline—for example, the use of punishments, the number of chores expected, the amount of back talk allowed—as well as the amount of time parents will spend with children and the ways money will be allocated. They will not be in exact agreement. If opinions diverge sharply, the couple can work out differences, getting counseling if necessary. When at least some differences are worked out before the marriage, problems that surface later will be easier to handle. If, for example, parents know that they tend to disagree about how much time should be spent with children, they will be prepared to compromise.

During this anticipatory period, as concrete plans for the remarriage are discussed, children may have fears about the effects of the blended family on their lives. Some children have worried that they will be automatically adopted, or that they will no longer be permitted to visit the other biological parent. Such fears can result in distant or withdrawn behavior. Prospective stepparents will have to listen carefully to what children say and try to understand their feelings. Active listening, feedback of feelings, and communication of wishes and thoughts are helpful. Dodson describes one prospective stepfather who could not seem to get along with his partner's son. This man felt that if the relationship with the boy could not be improved, he could not marry the mother. Dodson suggested that this man should try to get to know the boy by taking him off on an outing. The man got expensive football tickets, bought food, and tried very hard to relate to the boy. Although it was hard for him, the man accepted the boy's hostility calmly, and let him talk. Gradually the boy's fears that he would no longer be able to relate to his own father emerged. Active listening enabled the boy to express these fears, and the prospective stepfather reassured him that the fears were unrealistic.

Concrete plans

During the anticipatory period, very practical problems need to be handled. The solutions found for them can tell something very important about how the group will function as a family. For example, careful consideration should be given to where the family will live. Experts agree that, if possible, new living quarters should be found. Otherwise, the members moving into the home of the other partner may feel like invaders. Sometimes this is not possible—a move might be too costly, or might require the children to change schools. If so, it is wise to see if the present home can be rearranged so that each person feels he belongs there. Even if children come only for weekends, they need to feel they have their own space. Having special drawers and closet space, having individual sets of sheets and towels will help children feel at home, even if they cannot have a whole room to themselves.

Suppose you have gone through the process of mourning the previous marriage, have dated, committed yourself to a new relationship, exchanged ideas about parenting and found yourself in general agreement, and decided to remarry.



How do you tell the children? When possible, children should have an extended opportunity to know the prospective stepparent, and they should be told about the decision as soon as it is reached. Children report great bitterness over being told just before or after the wedding. In some situations, children refuse to hear the news, and occasionally they deny they were told. Once informed, they should be included in the wedding if possible. Many children have reported feeling rejected and angry that parents did not want them present—and those feelings made it difficult for them to begin to adjust to the new family and especially to the stepparent.

Parents may be surprised that the wedding itself may change children's attitudes toward stepparents. Some stepparents have reported that, although the children liked them before the wedding, after the marriage the children were rejecting, hostile, or withdrawn. If the adult who seemed to be a friend suddenly becomes a disciplinarian as well, the children may be surprised. Remember that the realities of day-to-day living are quite different from the atmosphere of visits and outings. Try to get to know as much as you can about each other before the wedding. And then it may be wise to assume gradually some of the facets of the new role.

Practical questions must be answered. What will the stepparents be called? "Mom" and "dad" may be inappropriate when the biological parent is alive and involved with the child. Most stepparents, in this period, are called by their first names. As intimacy develops, children may start to use "mom" and "dad." But this should be the child's choice. Remember that the name does not create the relationship. If and when a child feels that a stepparent has become a mother or father, then the use of the more intimate term will come naturally and will have the desired meaning.

THE HONEYMOON PERIOD

In marriage, this is a period of extended pleasure and freedom from intense pressures of day-to-day life. In parenting it is a period of increased pressure—there is so much to do for the newborn, and the child is a mystery. In stepparenting, the children are known before the wedding, but all relationships change with the wedding and the daily presence and interaction among new family members.

Emotional rapport

Children, and parents, are most likely to thrive in an emotional environment that is nurturing and fosters each person's growth and independence. This is as true of stepfamilies as it is of biological families, but such an environment may be more difficult for stepparents to create. Many have found that active listening, communicating feelings, and sharing activities all contribute to such an environment.

In a discussion of how relationships are developed in a stepfamily, Shirley Gould[4] advises parents to keep in mind three factors that influence this process. First, children have strong loyalty to the biological parent not living with them and to the previous marriage. Even when the biological parent has been absent or unresponsive to the child's needs, the child is likely to be reluctant to do anything that he thinks might endanger whatever relationship exists. Second, trust is not quickly established. This is ordinarily true in a relationship between two mature adults. And it is especially true in a relationship between a child who has gone through an emotional trauma (the divorce) and an adult who has entered that child's life uninvited by the child. Third, respect between stepparent and stepchild does not occur immediately or automatically. Respect, like trust, is the product of time and sharing and intimacy.

To create emotional rapport, learn as much as you can about your stepchildren—about their lives before you knew them, about what is important to them, about what makes each unique. Be observant when you are with them, and sensitive to their feelings and needs. Find activities you can share that will give pleasure to them and to you—perhaps special hobbies of interest to all, but also the simpler pleasures of picnics, games, and reading. Share yourself with them as you would like them to share with you. And gradually, as in any human relationship, bonds and closeness will be created.

Stepparents need to recognize that children continue psychological ties with the absent biological parent, whether the earlier marriage was ended by death or divorce. The parent needs to confirm that indeed the stepparent has intruded in the child's life by taking some of the spouse's time and energy, but that the stepparent is within his or her rights when doing this. No apologies need to be made, nor should the child be chastized for having trouble adjusting. Stepparents and spouses must accept that becoming a marital partner and parent at the same time creates stress. However, as learning and practice occur, stress decreases.

As parents recognize there are real problems, they can accept negative feelings, in themselves and in the children. Negative reactions in children do not mean that a stepparent has failed or that a child has rejected him or her. A child may like a stepparent and want to be close, but not feel ready. Members of stepfamilies need to remember that in biological families children get angry at parents for many reasons, and that this is particularly true during adolescence. Rejection by the child may be the result of the child's longing for the biological parent, not the result of anything the stepparent has or has not done.

A stepparent may find that he or she is not interested in the stepchildren and does not really want close relationships with them. Perhaps he is involved in work or other interests. Perhaps he grew up in a family in which emotional distance was maintained. When a woman who has married a man whose children come to visit finds she cannot have children of her own, she may resent his children, taking her pain and frustration out on them without realizing why.

If a man has shown little interest in the children and the mother has married him anyhow, Richard Gardner recommends honest discussion of the matter. A mother might say to her children, "Look, Joe is a nice guy, and I love him very much. I wish he were the kind of man who is really interested in children, but he isn't. Not all men are. I would like you to know that I wish he'd be more affectionate with you, but he isn't likely to be. You have Daddy and Uncle John, and you have me."[5] This approach helps the children to realize they are not responsible for the stepfather's lack of affection, and it may prevent them from having unrealistic expectations.

Honesty in relationships and feelings about others is important at all stages in stepparenting. Openly admitting to yourself that you do not like your stepchildren or are upset about some particular aspect of their behavior can pave the way to solutions to the problems. At the very least, such honesty allows you to express to your spouse your anger, confusion, and guilt about the problems. Many of the difficult feelings may result from unrealistic expectations of what you or the children can do in the situation. Not until each of you shares your feelings can you begin to help each other resolve problems. Instant closeness between stepparent and child does not occur any more frequently than instant closeness between any two individuals. As you make the adjustments of creating a new family, there will be conflicts. If all members of the stepfamily try to examine the situation realistically and to be honest with each other, the period of adjustment may be more emotionally chaotic but it is also likely to be more fun and to be shorter.

Stepfathers' problems

A stepfather whose biological children live with their mother may experience painful feelings as he goes about establishing relationships with stepchildren. He may regret the time he gives to another man's children when his own children do not get his attention. As a stepfather engages in new activities with stepchildren—playing ball, bike riding, roughhousing—he may yearn to have his children with him. If his former wife has remarried, he may resent the man who is now parenting his children. Relationships are further complicated if the stepfather sees his own children for only brief visits. He may find himself seeking their favor, fearful of disciplining them because he does not want to alienate them, to spoil the little time they have together. In this situation, a stepfather may want to spend some time with his own children in activities away from the blended family, so that he can maintain close relationships with his children.

Discipline

Discipline is probably the single biggest issue in stepparenting and accounts for the research findings that stepparents are best accepted when children are very young (and stepparents can help to establish discipline from the very beginning), or are young adults (presumably no longer in need of discipline). Adolescents are least able to accept a new parent because they are having difficulty coming to terms with any authority and are often already at loggerheads with biological parents.

The techniques for handling discipline problems are the same as those used in biological families. The main differences are that in stepfamilies there are more sources of problems. Biological parents do not always feel comfortable when dealing with discipline, and they have long and strong relationships with their children. So it is easy to understand that discipline may be even more difficult in stepfamilies, especially in the beginning.

The role of the stepparent Effective discipline depends on children wanting the approval and acceptance of adults. Thus, experts advise stepparents to wait until emotional rapport is established before beginning to discipline. Once a friendly bond is formed, stepparents can begin to play a role. When children are young and eager to have a stepparent, the stepparent will assume an active role sooner than in stepfamilies where children are older or have for many years been disciplined by a single biological parent.

In biological families, a set of rules for living develops over a period of time. In stepfamilies such rules must be established quickly. Stepparents can most easily take an active role in forming rules in family councils. There all members of the family over three or four contribute their opinion on issues. Dodson recommends that all decisions be made by unanimous vote, so that everyone feels the rules are what they want to live with. Parents may have to explain to young children the need for rules and limits in certain areas. But even young children can suggest rules and have their feelings considered. If unanimous agreement cannot be reached, issues can be brought up again, until the family finds solutions acceptable to all. When the blended family is just beginning to function as a unit, it is important to have everyone's support and cooperation.

Handling conflicts Children in a blended family are likely to go through a period of testing the parent or stepparent, to see if the agreed upon rules really hold firm. Will they get in trouble for violating the rules? Parents should not set rules unless they are prepared to enforce them—taking action, sending I-messages, looking for resolutions of the problems, or using some form of punishment.

A common retort, when rules are laid down and stepparents try to enforce them, is "You are not my father (or mother). I don't have to do what you want me to do!" What should stepparents do then? There is conflicting advice on this topic. Gerda Schulman,[6] who has worked with stepfamilies, suggests that the stepparent should turn to the biological parent for support. The biological parent can confirm the stepparent's authority to make decisions. The stepparent can then sit down with the child and describe how it makes him or her feel, sending I-messages about wanting cooperation and feeling hurt when it is not forthcoming.

Another approach is for the stepparent to use active listening and reflect the child's wishes that the adult was not making these decisions. "You're not my real parent" is the stepfamily equivalent of "I hate you." The child is most likely to say this when feeling threatened, upset, or hurt and wanting to hurt back. It is wise to try to explore the feelings underneath, and to respond in a way that is appropriate for those feelings and the circumstances that provoked the feelings.

When conflicts occur, some stepparents want to fight their own battles with stepchildren, and parents are advised to let them do it. Stepparents can send I-messages to convey concern about rule violations. Specific statements describing the upsetting behavior, and why it bothers the stepparent, can prevent the anger and bitterness that accusations, criticisms, and sarcasm can provoke. However, the stepparent must have the emotional support of the spouse. The spouse should communicate a sense of trust and respect for the stepparent's judgment. Support can be expressed in appreciative I-messages that bolster the stepparent and are heard by the child being disciplined.

Does this mean that a biological parent can never disagree with the stepparent? No. There will be instances when the two parents will disagree and will want to discuss the difference between themselves. In a small number of situations the biological parent may feel the child has been disciplined too severely—perhaps restricted more drastically than ever before with little advance warning. When this happens, the biological parent will voice disagreement in the child's presence—"The penalty seems too severe. The behavior doesn't seem that bad. Let's talk about it." Some experts believe children need to hear, in such a situation, that the biological parent is not abandoning them.

Parents may want to resolve some problems by changing their expectations of children. Particularly when the stepparent has not had children of his or her own, expectations may be too high. In some situations parents must back off, look at their own standards, talk to children, and perhaps revise the rules.

Special problems When stepchildren visit the home of the parent who does not have custody, children's needs for discipline, consistency, and love do not change. But the relationships are different from those in the home in which they live. Should they be required to abide by the rules of the family they are visiting? Or should they, because time is short and the emotional ties are fragile, be treated like guests? In most situations, visiting children should abide by the house rules.

BOX 13-1
GUIDELINES FOR STEPFAMILIES

1. Try to start out in a new apartment or house to minimize feelings of territoriality.
2. A primary couple relationship is critical for the continuing existence of the stepfamily. Adults often need time alone.
3. Activities among family members can help foster new relationships—undertaking a family project, going shopping together.
4. Preserving original relationships between parent and biological offspring may require special times away from blended family.
5. Do not expect instant love because relationships build over time.
6. Accept that a stepfamily, whose members have experienced loss, is a different kind of family. Nevertheless, it can bring pleasure and satisfaction to all members.
7. Divided loyalties make it hard for children to relate to new stepparents. As parents permit children to care for new adults, children will respond.
8. Courteous relationships between current family and the former family require time to work out and can be especially beneficial to all because hostility is reduced.
9. Accept that all members of the new family have a history of different values, styles of preference, ways of life. Parents must be supportive and helpful to children.
10. Stepparenting is more effective "if stepparents carve out a role for themselves that is different from and does not compete with the natural parents."
11. Integrating teen-agers can be particularly difficult.
12. Include stepchildren who are just visiting in family routine work and other activities.
13. Affection is important, but stepparents need to be careful not to allow that to lead to incest.
14. Understanding there will be many stresses and strains can help prepare family members for the realities of being a stepfamily.
15. Even occasional contacts with adult stepchildren can lead to strong ties among family members in later years.

Adapted from Emily B. Visher and John S. Visher, *Stepfamilies: A Guide to Working with Stepparents and Stepchildren* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1979), pp. 261–265.

Responsibilities for chores, table manners, general respect for the others' property and needs should be expected. Children often feel most comfortable when they are treated like members of the family. A few exceptions to the rules may be made in the beginning, particularly if the rules are very different from those in the child's other home. Parents can say, "It may take a little time to get used to our rules, but this is how we do it here." Parents need not apologize, and often children will accept the differences, as they do when they visit grandparents or other relatives.

In the last chapter, we talked about the single parent who moves back to the parents' home to live in a three-generation family. When these women marry again, they are especially likely to have difficulties with discipline in the new family. If the child has been indulged by grandparents, he or she may resent the discipline of the new stepfather more than the average child. The stepfather may consider it unwise to give the child everything he or she has had in the past. He may then be seen as cruel and depriving, and the child may become bitter and even aggressive. With all the changes going on in the family, the child may count on being indulged. When the children are sons, the stepfather often has great difficulty, because the boy who has lacked a male model is sometimes more passive as well as more indulged. A stepfather finds it hard to come between mother and child. But he must if he is to establish his place in the family. Also, differences in style of discipline may set mother against stepfather.

As we noted, the aims, purposes and techniques of discipline are the same in stepfamilies as in biological families. Discipline problems are likely to be most complicated and numerous during the first few months. Time, patience, and involvement can help solve these problems.

THE PLATEAU PERIOD

As new family members come to know each other more intimately and family life is organized and structured with rules that are agreeable to all, the role of the stepparent increases and both parents are able to contribute to the growth of independence and ego mastery skills of children. As stepparents love and care for children, we see that adults and children need not be biologically related for adults to be central figures in their lives. Stepparents make a valuable contribution to children's growth as they can sometimes be more objective about stepchildren than the biological parent. Precisely because they lack long-term relationships with children and are less invested in what the child does, a stepparent may be able to look at the child's current behavior with unbiased eyes. Many a biological parent feels grateful for the new insights or the calm, controlled approach of the stepparent.

One stepmother described[7] what happened when her husband's teen-age son came to live with the couple after living with his mother for five years following the divorce. Father and son began to bicker and fight. The father saw his tall son as a rival, and the son resented his father's discipline. At first the stepmother intervened in the fights. When she found that did not help, she changed her tactics and became a mediator. She took her husband aside and explained how hard it was for the son, during adolescence, suddenly to be living with his father and disciplined by him. And she took the son aside and explained the adjustments the father was having to make to this new situation. With the stepmother's help, father and son were able to back off and arrive at a better relationship.

Stepparents can add to children's feelings of uniqueness and specialness. As stepparents get to know children, they spend time in joint activities, enjoy their humor, and appreciate each child's individuality and sense of self. The children's feelings of self-esteem grow as they find another person who regards them positively. For example, another stepmother[8] described how she incorporated her two stepsons in the blended family when she was pregnant with her own child. This woman asked her husband about what the boys had been like as babies and young children, and about especially memorable moments and events in their lives. Then she was able to enhance the sense of individuality of each of the boys by telling them stories about themselves. As her own children arrived and grew up, she was able to talk to her stepsons about their behavior at the same ages, and they enjoyed the descriptions immensely and also felt closer to their stepsiblings. This stepmother's warmth and concern for her stepsons gave them each a feeling of specialness that contributed to feelings of competence. This woman dealt with one of the biggest drawbacks in stepparenting—not having long-term relationships with the children she was parenting—by learning about the boys from their father.

A child of your own

Parents in a blended family may wonder whether they should have a child of their own. Dodson advises parents to make this decision the same way anyone else does—on the basis of their own needs and wishes. While children of a second marriage can create problems and children of previous marriages may feel left out, they often help to unify the family and strengthen family ties. Everyone feels attached to the new baby. The stepmother who found out about her stepsons' babyhoods was able to use her pregnancy to draw the family closer together. The Nobles described a mother who included her stepchildren, fourteen and sixteen, as important figures for her son in that marriage. The teen-age children played with the baby and took him places, and the mother felt that their attentions helped to stimulate the child's growth. She was warm in her praise to the two older children and shared with them her feelings about how important they were to the young child.

The desirability of adoption depends on the particular circumstances of the family. In some situations, children have not known the biological father and are eager to be adopted by a caring stepfather they love. They cannot wait to change their names and to be truly able to call their stepfather "dad." In other situations, when the absent biological parent plays a role, even a limited role, adoption is not advised unless all parties are in hearty agreement. Children may feel deprived of their relationship with the biological parent and resent being included in the new family in this way. Conversely, stepparents may not feel comfortable with adoption for various reasons—financial obligations, lack of closeness, fear of responsibilities if the marriage is not going well. Thus, adoption should be carefully considered.

Incest

The taboo on incest in the nuclear family is nearly universal. Experts advance many reasons for the prohibition against incest—it decreases jealousy and rivalry within the family, it helps to insure that parents will meet the children's dependency needs rather than seeking sexual favors from them, it increases contact between families and other groups as they seek sexual partners, and it reduces the possibility of an inbred population. But despite the taboo, incest does occur in both biological and stepfamilies. Karin Meiselman,[9] using Alfred Kinsey's data, estimates that incest occurs in one or two lifetimes out of a hundred. When it happens, the effects can be devastating.

Sexuality is a greater source of tension in stepfamilies than in biological families. Stepbrothers and stepsisters living close together during adolescence may develop sexual feelings for each other. This leads to tension, and often to fighting that is an expression of these feelings. The sexual activities of newly married stepparents are likely to be more frequent and ardent than those that precede divorce and are likely to stimulate children's interest in sex. Stepparents may be attracted to stepchildren or vice versa. Emily and John Visher[10] report that a clinic specializing in the treatment of problems related to incest reports that 50 percent of the clients are stepfathers and stepdaughters. This suggests that incest is higher in stepfamilies than in biological families, because most families—certainly more than 50 percent—are biological families. However, it is possible that there is less reluctance to report incest in stepfamilies, rather than a lower incidence of incest in biological families.

To minimize the possibility of incest between a stepbrother and stepsister, parents are advised by Frank Strange,[11] a psychologist, to establish rules. For example, all family members are to dress modestly, only one person is to use the bathroom at a time, no one is to enter anyone else's bedroom without knocking and being given permission to enter. When the parents are away from home and teen-age stepchildren are there, an adult should be present. Parents would not leave unrelated boys and girls alone together and should not leave adolescent siblings unattended.

Such precautions really are necessary. Since brothers and sisters are available and stimulating to each other, teen-agers who would not engage in such activities with peers outside the family may be overwhelmed by their intense and persistent sexual feelings. They require protection from too much stimulation and limits for their actions. They should be treated as parents would treat any other boys and girls. Sexual activity, if it does occur, can give children strong feelings of guilt and shame about their sexuality, and the guilt, particularly, may have long-lasting effects.

Not only is sexual stimulation occurring between teen-age children, but their parents' active sexual life is an influence and can trigger children's fantasies. Teen-age children are aware that parents are active sexually—going to their bedroom early in the evening, going there during the day. It is not surprising, then, that teen-age children, who are just becoming aware of their own sexual feelings, may find themselves attracted to stepparents of the opposite sex. In physical contacts with preadolescent and adolescent children, parents must draw a line between the desire for affection and the expression of erotic feelings. Stepparents can respond warmly to requests for affection but must be careful not to provide gratification for erotic feelings.

A more difficult problem occurs when a parent finds himself or herself attracted to a child in the family. Arnold[12] emphasizes the difference between feelings and behavior. Many individuals experience fleeting feelings of attraction but never act on such feelings. Other adults do act, and the results are probably even more destructive than the emotional trauma of sibling incest. Often reported incest is between men and their stepdaughters, usually young girls. And these are likely to be their first sexual experiences—traumatic, guilt laden, premature, and physically painful. Such experiences are likely to shape and distort, perhaps permanently, the attitudes of these girls toward sex and toward men.

Meiselman identifies high-risk families as having one or more of the following components: (1) an alcoholic and violent father; (2) a mother who is away from home, physically ill, depressed, or passive; (3) an older daughter who has had the responsibility of a mother; (4) parents who have failed to establish a satisfying sexual relationship; (5) fathers and daughters who spend too much time alone with each other; (6) any condition, like psychosis or below average intelligence, that reduces an individual's capacity for self-control; (7) previous incest in a parent's family; and (8) a romantic attachment with unusual amounts of physical affection between adult and child. Family members can observe when a too-close attachment is developing and step in to advise professional counseling.

If incest takes place, it is unlikely to be reported, to an adult or to an outside authority. Often children remain quiet for years, feeling guilty and dirty, believing they somehow caused the behavior. When a family member becomes aware of incest within the family, he or she must take steps immediately to protect the child. After making an extensive review of the literature on incest and carrying out a study of her own, Meiselman writes:

> When a current or recent case of incest has been reported, the incest victim should be assured that he or she will be protected against any further incestuous incidents, and the responsible authority should take whatever steps are necessary to guarantee the security of the child. Peters, who has dealt with a large number of cases of sexual assaults on children, has emphasized that this basic assurance of protection is the cornerstone of treatment, which often dictates what kinds of therapeutic interventions will be employed. In father–daughter incest cases where a younger daughter is also present in the home, this principle of protection should be extended to her, since there is abundant evidence that such daughters are at high risk for incest should the elder daughter be removed from the home.[13]

Meiselman advises that a report of incest should be accepted as true. Research indicates such acts have taken place in the vast majority of cases reported—the victims are not fantasizing. When authorities are called in, the family often protects the adult because of fear and shame about incest, because of loss of the stepfather's income, and because of fear of retaliation from the accused family member. Members may also worry about public knowledge of such an event if there is a trial or other legal proceedings. The family may hesitate to bring on the adult the condemnation and incarceration that may result.

What should be done when incest has occurred and has been reported? First, the security of the child should immediately be arranged. Meiselman asserts that incest is a negative life experience that continues to damage people. The father or the child can be removed from the home. It is not sufficient to state that the parent and child will not be permitted in the house alone. Incest can occur during the night, when everyone else is asleep yet all are at home. Second, the child should have the opportunity to vent feelings of anger, fear, guilt, and shame about the act with a therapist. Although some children may be initially hesitant to talk, the experienced therapist can encourage the child to talk and can offer reassurances that help the child deal with the feelings created by incest. Family members may have suggested that the child is somehow permanently tainted or damaged, and the therapist should reassure the child that this is not true.

Self-help groups have arisen to help adolescents deal with the experience of incest, and participation in such a group may do even more than a therapist to help the child talk and handle what has occurred and what she is feeling. When a young girl hears that others have had the same experience, when she realizes that she has not been singled out for some inexplicable reason and hears that others also were victims, it may be easier for her to accept this interpretation for herself.

Some form of therapy for all family members should be started once the situation is arranged so that any further incest is impossible. Therapists have had difficulty in keeping the sexually abusing parent, usually the father or stepfather, in treatment. Couple therapy that focuses on sexual problems in the marriage and improves sexual satisfaction is sometimes helpful. If the father has left the home and is no longer an active part of the family, the mother may need to be helped to deal with her passivity. Often that has prolonged the situation. If family meetings include all individuals, it is important that in the process of looking at the dynamics of the family, the child does not get the feeling that he or she is responsible.

Money

In any family, money can be a major source of problems, and it is a factor in the failures of many remarriages. The flow of money to and from a household can be complicated and complicating, especially if both the wife and the husband have been married before and both have children from the earlier marriages. Who has how many children of what ages in which household? Which wives are working? Which husbands? Which children need child care, special medical care, special education? How far must each set of children travel to visit the other biological parent? Is one parent, or set of parents, more responsible than another about making the agreed payments for child support?

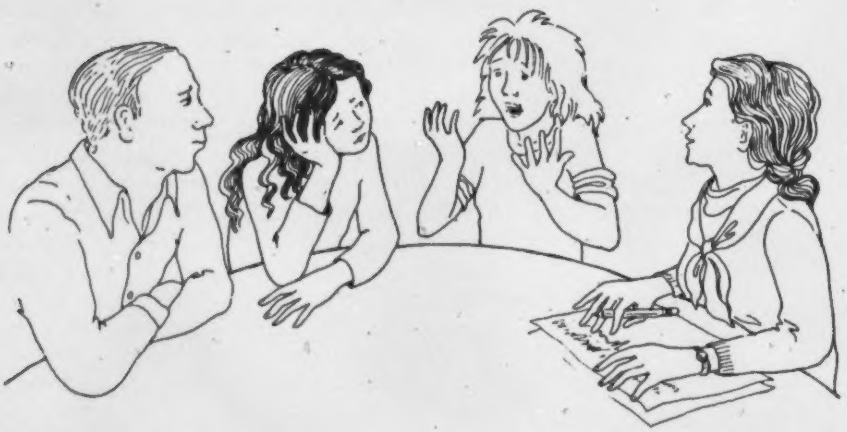
Money, itself a symbol of the labor required to earn it, is often used to represent feelings. The wife who complains about the amount of child support her husband is providing for his children who live with their mother may, in reality, be expressing resentment about the amount of attention and concern her husband continues to give to his former wife. The father who is late in making child support payments to his former wife may be expressing anger that he is not permitted to spend more time with his biological children. Children, too, become involved in money battles. For example, a child may—silently or aloud—accuse his father and stepmother of having more than enough money, while the mother with whom he lives works long hours and both he and she do without necessities. In reality he may also be expressing feelings of being rejected by the father.

In an ideal world, divorce settlements and arrangements for child support would be equitable for all involved. But such is not always the case, even at the time of divorce. And as one parent or the other remarries, moves, changes jobs, has additional children, sustains a costly illness, or finds it necessary to care for an aging parent, circumstances and financial abilities change and all are caught in the flux of events. How can these problems be dealt with so that they are not destructive?

First, prospective spouses should discuss money in detail before they get married. And they should talk not only about amounts—which are certain to change as circumstances change—but also about attitudes, as should any couple before they marry. Is there a specific expense, or kind of expense, that one or the other objects to—for example, supporting a teen-ager in college? Does one want a new car every year while the other believes in regular savings? A dislike of stinginess or extravagance is as important a factor in a marriage as a dislike of snoring or seafood.

Even a thorough and specific discussion about money and clearly stated arrangements about the dispersement of child support and about expectations of the way money is to be spent cannot eliminate all money problems. When disagreements occur after marriage, these can best be handled in family councils, especially if the children are past the preschool years. Family members can state their priorities and can share ways to get the most for the money available. Children, as well as adults, often have useful ideas about how to achieve goals while spending the fewest possible dollars.

Family councils are also opportunities for all family members to discuss and listen to each other's feelings. Remember that talk about money is often talk about feelings as well. Active listening can elicit feelings that children may be reluctant or



fearful about expresssing directly—frustration, anger, sadness. Children need to know that parents and stepparents are interested in their feelings and are truly hearing what is behind talk that sounds as if it is about money but that is really about feelings. Jealousy of a sibling or stepsibling or concern about being accepted as the new child in a new school in a new town may be expressed as a demand for a higher allowance or new clothes. Both the money problem and the underlying problem are closer to resolution when children and parents are able to express feelings, needs, and limits openly.

Stepgrandparents

Just as parents need not be biologically related to children to be central figures in their lives, grandparents need not be biologically related to grandchildren to fill the grandparent role. Stepparents enlarge the family, provide other adults who both love and appreciate children's special qualities. There is the fun of large family gatherings, the sharing of a lifetime of experiences that teach children about the past.

Not all stepgrandparents enjoy this role. Some older people have rigid notions that only biological children and grandchildren are really family members. Sometimes grandparents are fond of the earlier spouse or do not approve of the marriage that gave them stepgrandchildren. Some refuse to accept stepgrandchildren, and sometimes adopted grandchildren as well. Many stepparents have been deeply hurt when their parents have refused to accept stepgrandchildren. A stepfather cannot force his parents to accept and love his stepchildren as their own. But he can sit down and talk with his parents, sending I-messages about how important this is to him.

Just as it takes time for stepparents and stepchildren to get to know each other, so too is this true for stepgrandparents and stepgrandchildren. And there are even more obstacles here. First, many older people have difficulty accepting divorce, anyone's divorce. Affection and loyalty to the earlier spouse may make it difficult to accept the new spouse, and that in turn can get in the way of acceptance of the stepgrandchildren. Remember, too, that grandparents spend less time with the children, often in the relatively strained circumstances of visits or family gatherings where relationships must be explained and other people need attention or are more congenial companions.

But remember, also, that children, and especially young children, are not consciously aware of all these undercurrents of feelings. They are most aware of whether they are accepted and treated as members of the family or as intruders. If your parents have difficulty accepting your stepgrandchildren, try talking with them, telling them how you feel and how your spouse and stepchildren feel. Ask your parents about their feelings and reactions and about what they suggest can be done. If, over time, their attitudes do not change and they are unable or unwilling to be more accepting of their stepgrandchildren, visits and time spent together can be decreased. Then the members of all three generations are less often upset by disturbing encounters. As always, when family contact is diminished, all members suffer and all lose the enrichment of their lives that only family can contribute. In this situation it is often the stepgrandparents who lose the most, for they are usually at the period in their lives when they have time to enjoy grandchildren, when they have the most to give of themselves, and when they need the support and company of children and grandchildren. So it is, for everyone, worth the time and emotional effort to try to bring about mutual acceptance that can lead to pleasure for all.

In a sense there is no termination of the stepparent role, certainly as long as the marriage lasts and often even if it does not. Just as biological parents parent their adult children, so stepparents are involved with adult stepchildren and with stepgrandchildren. Stepparents can help at times of emergency—illness, accidents—and be supportive of both the adult stepchild and the spouse. The experience of many members of stepfamilies is that living together closely, being concerned with the needs of all, forges bonds that last a lifetime.

SUMMARY

Stepparenting can be thought of as occurring in stages: the anticipatory stage in which partners deal with the loss of the previous marriage, reenter the social world of dating, select a prospective mate and explore areas of agreement and disagreement on issues affecting the daily life of a new family; the honeymoon stage in which problems in adjusting to the new way of life are met; and the plateau stage in which some enduring problems are worked out.

At each of the stages stepfamilies can use the problem-solving techniques used by biological families, even though in stepfamilies problems and relationships are more complex and more numerous. Active listening, I-messages and I-feel statements, family councils, and firm house rules are as useful in stepfamilies as in biological families.

The two biggest concerns in stepfamilies are establishing emotional ties with the children and establishing fair and firm limits agreed on by all. The individual who becomes a stepparent is counseled to be patient and to have realistic expectations about closeness. Stepparents must respect stepchildren's individual personalities and must work slowly to establish emotional bonds. Family structure and rules for interacting are established at family councils in which all members express their feelings and contribute to the rules. When there is unanimous agreement, stepparents can feel free to step in and see that the limits are observed. During the early adjustment period it is critical for the parent and stepparent to be emotionally supportive of each other and of the children. When a problem occurs or a rule is broken, family members can use I-messages and active listening or can bring the subject up in a family council. Love, affection, trust, and respect between the partners must be solid. The couple's relationship must be the primary bond. Brenda Maddox sums up the strengths of the stepfamily and the joys of participation in it:

> There are a few plain truths about stepparenthood that I learned writing this book. I was blind not to have recognized them when I got married. Stepfamilies can be happy, even happier than families in which there has never been more than one mother or father but it takes more work. The tensions

of the stepfamily are special and real. A stepparent cannot be the same as a real parent. There are no new Mommies and new Daddies. Yet there are compensations for the strains. My own particular reward has been to help two young people who are nothing like me to be more like themselves and to watch the bond grow between the two sets of children. Stepfamilies in general do have positive advantages. When a stranger has to be taken into the family circle, when children have a parent who lives somewhere else, the family has an extra dimension. There is not that claustrophobia that led the anthropologist Dr. Edmind Leach to describe the ordinary family "with its narrow privacy and tawdry secrets" as "the source of all our discontents." The stepfamily is open and tough. It is not a bad place to live for those who can accept the uncomfortable fact that many of the tensions between stepparents and stepchildren will be inevitable as long as spouses are replaceable and parents are not.[14]

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1 Fitzhugh Dodson, *How to Discipline with Love* (New York: Rawson Associates, 1977).

2 Alice S. Rossi, "Transition to Parenthood," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 30 (1968): 26-39.

3 L. Eugene Arnold, "A Summary of Guidance Implications," in *Helping Parents Help Their Children*, ed. L. Eugene Arnold (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1978), pp. 301-303.

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5 Ruth Roosevelt and Jeanette Lofas, *Living in Step* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), p. 180.

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10 Emily B. Visher and John S. Visher, *Stepfamilies: A Guide to Working with Stepparents and Stepchildren* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1979).

11 Noble and Noble, *How to Live with Other People's Children.*

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13 Meiselman, *Incest*, p. 337.

14 Brenda Maddox, *The Half-Parent* (New York: New American Library, 1975), p. 167.

14

Inner and outer resources

Healthy children develop occasional behavior problems as ways of expressing the tension that accompanies growth and life. The stress that occurs during times of transition is particularly likely to trigger such problems. Birth of a sibling, entrance into kindergarten and junior high school, separation, divorce, or remarriage of parents, and acute or chronic illness are among the events that can lead to behavior problems. Such problems are, however, usually temporary and decrease as the child adapts to the new situation.

What do you do when all your attempts at effective parenting do not resolve the child's problems? How do you decide whether to seek professional help? How do you decide what kind of help is needed? How do you go about finding the appropriate person or agency?

ASSESSING THE PROBLEMS

Parents can use the following guidelines in deciding whether the problems are sufficiently severe to need professional help. How *intense* are the problems? If a child has nightmares once or twice a week, parents might not seek help. If the child begins to have nightmares every night and cannot return to sleep for some time, parents might decide, after two or three weeks, that they need help.

How *long* have the behavior problems existed? A child who still has moderate problems several months after a new baby joins the household may need help.

A child who cannot adjust to kindergarten four or five months after the school year has begun may need extra help.

What effects are the behavior problems having on the child's overall life pattern? Are the problems *preventing development*? For example, a child who has learning problems may come to hate not only school work but also his teachers, the principal, and other children at school. His hostility then cuts him off from other people and gives him the additional problem of being a loner. Fearfulness and extreme self-consciousness produce the same results. Nervousness around others may prevent the child from developing friends and also hinder academic work at school because the child is afraid of criticism. When parents realize that a child is developing moderate to severe problems that are hampering several areas of functioning, they should take action to head off a vicious cycle of behaviors.

Are the problems having *negative effects* on other family members? Parents may find themselves so concerned about the problems and so affected by them that they feel professional help is required. For example, a teen-ager's acting out by getting poor grades may be so upsetting to the mother that it creates a rift between the parents and affects the other children in the family.

Does the child show a *dramatic change* in behavior for no apparent reason—behavior that does not disappear? If so, you may wish to seek help. A child who has always been independent and self-reliant becomes dependent and clingy and does not reestablish previous patterns within a reasonable time. Her parents may seek help, depending on how severe the behavior problem is and how appropriate it is for the developmental stage. A previously independent teen-age girl who becomes more dependent on others, particularly peers, will arouse parental concern. But they are not likely to institute treatment, because dependence on peers and conflicts around dependence on parents are typical of adolescence. However, if a previously independent third grader suddenly develops fears and refuses to venture far from home, and there were no precipitating events, parents would be likely to seek help because children are usually increasing in independence at this age.

SOME SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Lee Salk[1] lists the following kinds of problems at different age periods as worthy of parental concern. He cautions that no one of these problems alone is necessarily an indication of emotional disturbance. Rather, the persistence of problems and the number together will alert parents to possible trouble.

Preschool years: During these years parents should seek help if the child has continuous nightmares, wets the bed frequently after training is accomplished, masturbates excessively, shows total disregard for parental authority, is brutal towards siblings, is unable to get along with other children, is determined to cling to parents, or is withdrawn when with others.

School years: Salk focuses on school problems of all kinds. Behavioral problems triggered by learning disabilities, including reluctance to go to school, truancy, bullying other children at school. You can add to this list such other

problems as cruelty to children or animals, continual lying or stealing, and destructiveness. Increasing numbers of preadolescent children report marked depression, and some attempt suicide. Just as the quiet, withdrawn child goes unnoticed, so the depressed, tired, and uninterested child may go unnoticed because he or she makes no disturbance. Prolonged lack of interest and enthusiasm, poor appetite, poor sleep patterns, or withdrawal from friends indicate a need for professional help.

Adolescent years: Salk lists the acting out problems associated with delinquency, rebelliousness, stealing, and breaking the law in other ways. Other similar problems are alcoholism, which is a growing problem among teen-agers, sexual acting out, and depression. One form of adolescent behavior not quickly identified as depression, but containing an underlying depressive theme, is rebellious acting out. Rebellious teen-agers are restless, vaguely unhappy persons who become uneasy if they are not in motion. They may drive poorly, drink excessively, and present a facade of delinquent characteristics. Yet they are basically depressed and discouraged. They seek the activity and trigger arguments with others to ward off the self-criticism and self-doubts that lie just under the surface.

HOW TO PROCEED

What should you do when you identify behaviors of concern? You can attempt to identify events that may be triggering and sustaining the problems. At times of transition you can expect behavioral reactions. Traumatic transitions include a move to a new school, loss of friends because the family moves, and changes in the family because parents separate. The first step is to see if the behavior subsides with time and support. Parents can offer understanding and seek ways to ease the path of growth. You can encourage new activities that will help the child meet new friends, for example. When a child has experienced a loss, you can help the child to find and enjoy pleasurable activities that are fun and help to balance the difficulties.

Parents can also examine strategies being used to see if some changes are needed. Nightmares may be helped by new bedtime routines, and by helping the child to find acceptable ways to express aggression. You can ask other parents about their experiences with similar problems and get ideas about how to handle them.

As parents observe the child and try to understand the behavior, they need to realize that often a behavior problem is related to a series of different kinds of events, and interventions must occur at several levels. This was true of a four-year-old boy, Tim, whose parents took him to a therapist because he was experiencing night terrors. The parents had done everything they could think of, but they were losing too much sleep and becoming less able to function. So they sought help. This little boy was the middle of three children, with a younger brother about a year old. Tim was a slow-maturing, slender child who enjoyed physical affection and cuddling. Before the birth of his younger brother, Tim's parents had had more time and attention for him. Shortly after the birth, his mother went to work part-time in the late afternoon, so Tim had even less time with her. He had never been able to compete against his older, more competent sister, and he felt rejected and angry, but fearful of expressing these feelings. His nightmares expressed both the anger and the fear and, equally important, got his mother's attention for long periods as she tried to get him to sleep. As the parents began to give Tim more attention and to be firmer about a prescribed bedtime routine, the child settled down.

We can see from this example that the problem resulted from a combination of several facts—the child's slower rate of maturing and individual temperament, the arrival of a new sibling, the mother's going to work, and parenting strategies that had encouraged the problem. The parenting strategy was just one factor in the situation, although a decisive one for promoting change.

On occasion, parents will seek professional help for a child's problem, and discover that the problem is their response to the situation, not the child. Stella Chess, Alexander Thomas, and Herbert Birch[2] cite several examples of parents' unrealistic expectations for a child. This one is particularly helpful:

> Problems can develop if parents expect a child to act like some dream-child of their imagination instead of being *himself*. For example, a few years ago a mother consulted us about her five-year-old son. She was afraid he was schizophrenic because he was quiet and withdrawn. He wouldn't play baseball or skate with the other children and was even reluctant to go outdoors.
>
> The boy looked like a handsome, solemn, quiet, hesitant youngster. We invited him into the playroom to see how he would adapt to a new situation and a new person, and how he would play.

> For a few minutes he sat quietly, looking around at everything in the room. Then he walked over to the blocks, carefully examined each size and shape, and then began to play, eventually bringing in dolls, cars, and so on. When he wanted to know what some unfamiliar object was or how to use it, he asked us without hesitating. Gradually he began to tell us what he played with at home and what he liked about the toys that were new to him.
>
> There was nothing at all the matter with the youngster. He was just not the ideal boy his mother had anticipated. She was a vigorous, active woman who had been a tomboy and couldn't wait to live vicariously a *real* boy's life, through her son. In her efforts to make him conform to her ideal, she had pressured him to become a bubbling, gregarious athlete. He had resisted, not by violent protests, but in his characteristic fashion by quiet retreat. It is possible that this retreat might eventually have made him a seriously withdrawn child.

Some parents seek help with children's problems when, in fact, it is their own problems that are creating difficulties. One mother brought her thirteen-year-old daughter to a therapist because she was concerned about the girl being boy-crazy, rebellious, and depressed. During the interview, the therapist realized that the mother's depression was marked and that concern about her own sexuality was the major issue in her life. After the daughter was evaluated, it was the mother who became the patient.

Because a parent's judgment that the child has problems may be inaccurate, it is wise for a parent to seek professional help alone, once or twice, to discuss the problems. Following evaluation, the therapist can decide whether the parent, the child, or both, need counseling.

Sometimes it is difficult to isolate the problem of the child from its effects on other people in the family and sometimes on school personnel and other nonfamily members. When all members of a family are affected, it is wise to consider family interactions as well as individual therapy. Ideas for interventions can come from family councils or family sessions. If the situation becomes worse, family therapy should be considered.

FORMS OF HELP

Most parents find it very difficult to face the idea that one of their children has problems they cannot handle. When we discover a child has a serious problem, we often feel guilty, wondering what we could have done to prevent it and how we have caused it. Professionals and parents are becoming increasingly aware that many kinds of factors and events influence a child's growth into adulthood. When parents understand this, they are likely to feel less guilty and more competent in helping the troubled child to cope.

It is natural to wait and hope these problems will go away. Sometimes they do. However, most severe problems lead to more difficulties, and consultation with a professional can be very useful. Where should you start? First, a pediatrician can determine if there is a physical reason for the child's behavioral problems. A thorough check-up may reveal physiological conditions that result in behavioral consequences. In this situation, treatment of the physical condition can alter the troubling behavior. For example, a child with reported learning and behavioral problems may be found to have minimal brain dysfunction. The pediatrician can make an evaluation of the usefulness of medication.

Parents may feel, after the child has been examined by the pediatrician, that additional help is needed. If so, the parent can call and get referrals from the pediatrician as well as from local professional societies—the medical, psychological or social work organizations—to the appropriate persons. If the child requires treatment that involves medical training and ability to prescribe medication, referral to a psychiatrist might be what is needed. If knowledge of healthy growth and development and awareness of behaviors associated with usual life crises are important, or if psychodiagnostic evaluation is required, referral to a clinical psychologist might be considered. If referral to a professional person with skills in mobilizing social support and help for families in crisis is required, a psychiatric social worker might be most helpful. Where family dynamics are interlocking and close and strong relationships enmesh several family members in the "child's" problem, family therapy may be most valuable. In getting any kind of referral, other parents or professionals who work with children can be sources of referrals.

When discussing a child's treatment with a professional, the parent should ask about the individual's educational and professional background. A professional is usually happy to answer such questions. The parent can ask about the likelihood of change, and about the length of time needed to remedy the problems. A therapist who does not know the family or the situation in detail will probably be reluctant to make a very precise estimate of time or suggest particular techniques. Such specifics begin to be clear only when the therapist understands the situation better, perhaps after several sessions.

SOURCES OF STRENGTH

When children have problems, we can try to change our parenting strategies, we can get professional help, and we can try to change the balance of pressures so that coping and adaptation occur. Satisfactions that give pleasure also create strength. In *Anatomy of an Illness*, a discussion of his experience of a life-threatening collagen disease, Norman Cousins[3] describes the healing, strengthening power of humor. He found that watching old Marx Brothers films and reruns of "Candid Camera" brought release from pain and periods of relaxed sleep that increased his strength and powers of recovery. Cousins writes of the healing powers of laughter and of creativity. Help your child to find and engage in those activities most pleasurable for him, and you will be helping him to heal himself.

In helping children cope with problems, we have a great ally in the child's natural capacities. Jean Macfarlane, Lucile Allen, and Marjorie Honzik,[4] concluding their study of the persistence of behavior problems, write:

> May we pay our respects to the adaptive capacity of the human organism, born in a very unfinished and singularly dependent state into a highly com-

> plex and not too sensible world. Unless handicapped by inadequate structure and health and impossible and capricious learning situations, he threads his way to some measure of stable and characteristic patterning. We see the variety of coping devices he uses for his complex set of tasks. He starts out with overt expression of his needs and feelings and attempts immediate and direct solutions to his problems. Many of his overt and direct problem-solving attempts are not tolerated, so he learns when necessary to sidestep, to evade, to withdraw, to get hurt feelings and, also, to submit overtly even while his releases and problem-solving continue internally until controls are established. If he is under fairly stable and not too discontinuous pressures and secures enough approval and support to continue his learning and enough freedom to work out his own compromise overt-covert solutions, he becomes to use the vernacular, "socialized," and even without this optimum combination, he frequently arrives at stable maturity.

Relying on the strengths of children and their drives to healthy growth, parents can move with greater confidence to carry out their role as prescribed by Selma Fraiberg:[5]

> Man's consciousness of himself as a being, the concept of "I," of personal identity—the very center of his humanness—is achieved through the early bonds of child and parent. The triumph of man over his instinctual nature, his willingness to restrict, inhibit, even to oppose his own urges when they conflict with higher goals for himself, is again the product of learning, an achievement through love in the early years of development. Conscience it-

self, the most civilizing of all achievements in human evolution, is not part of the constitutional endowment, as any parent can testify, but the endowment of parental love and education.

If we read our evidence correctly, it appears that parents need not be paragons; they may be inexperienced, they may be permitted to err in the fashion of the species, to employ sometimes a wrong method or an unendorsed technique, and still have an excellent chance of rearing a healthy child if the bonds between parents and child are strong and provide the incentives for growth and development in the child. For the decisive factors in mental health are the capacities of the ego for dealing with conflict, the ability to tolerate frustration, to adapt, and to find solutions that bring harmony between inner needs and outer reality. These qualities of the ego are themselves the product of the child's bonds to his parents, the product of the humanizing process.

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Parenting is more than solving problems. It is promoting healthy growth, building strengths, and encouraging individuality in children, too. This book is designed to help parents of children of all ages meet the basic, sometimes complex tasks of parenting as well as solve common problems. It includes practical information on child development as well as specific suggestions and guidelines that parents can put to work to become more effective and fulfilled in their roles. Dr. Brooks believes that parents' and children's needs are individual, and she does not advocate using a single approach or particular method of child rearing. She compares the strategies of some of the major parenting experts in such a way that parents can choose and implement those approaches most compatible with their own values.

The author

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